

<b>SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
<b>7 APRIL 2014</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Director of Growth and Regeneration**

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### **CITY COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY: PROGRESS REPORT 2012/13 & 2013/14**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Provide information with respect to progress against the actions and targets contained in the Council's Biodiversity Strategy (2010).
- b) Allow feedback to be given by the Committee with respect to progress against the existing strategy.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note progress made against the Council's 2010 Biodiversity Strategy and to make any recommendations with regards to the future implementation of the Strategy.**

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

3.1 The 2010 Strategy is linked to the Community Strategy and National Indicators via the Cleaner/Greener agenda and sections of these documents. Reporting against the Council Biodiversity Strategy will be used, along with other reporting, to give a more detailed picture of the breadth of the actions taking place for biodiversity within our local authority area.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

4.1 This report is submitted to the Committee by the Council's Wildlife Officer as a progress report for 2012/13 and 2013/14 against the existing Biodiversity Strategy. The Strategy was agreed in 2010 with a requirement for annual reporting on progress against the specific actions and targets of the Strategy.

#### **5. KEY ISSUES**

5.1 The key issues which the Committee need to consider are laid out in the appendices. All progress on required actions since the 2011/12 progress report have been achieved from within the Council's existing budgets. Future ability to progress against the 2010 Strategy will be dependent on some changes to land management and maintaining existing resources where possible.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The 2010 Biodiversity report included consideration of cost and resource implications. It was made clear that the actions set out in the 2010 report would have to be achieved within existing resources and that it was envisaged that biodiversity gain could be made through adjusting rather

than completely changing current practices. The adoption of the vision statement by Council strongly reinforced this.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation and discussion has been undertaken with the Director of Growth and Regeneration and representatives from various departments including Bereavement Services, Children's Services, Climate Change Team, Natural & Historic Environment Team and Enterprise Peterborough.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 Feedback from the Committee will be used to inform the future focus of the Council's Biodiversity Officer Working Group.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 40).
- Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty, Defra, May 2007.
- Peterborough City Council Approach to Biodiversity submitted to the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee in 2010.
- Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy (including Rural Vision Strategy and Environment Capital manifesto).
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, Defra 2011

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix A: Report of progress against actions and targets of Peterborough City Councils Biodiversity Strategy
- 10.2 Appendix B: Full reports from the members of the Biodiversity Officer Working Group

**Appendix A: Report of progress against actions and targets of the Councils Biodiversity Strategy**

	<b>Key Recommendations and Action Points from the Biodiversity Strategy</b>	<b>Update on Progress/Action underway</b>	<b>Barrier to Progress</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
1	<p>All Council and contract staff directly involved in the management of open space should be given training and guidance on good management practice to safeguard and promote Biodiversity.</p> <p>This should include the identification of 'model' sites to demonstrate best practice.</p>	<p>The Natural and Historic Environment (N&amp;HE) Team has continued general liaison and advice to officers and departments from across the Council with respect to Biodiversity, including for example Highways and Rights of Way officers and Enterprise Peterborough (EP) staff.</p> <p>Green-spaces at a number of locations (e.g. Thorpe Meadows, Ravensthorpe) are now being managed by EP in a way that promotes biodiversity, with their success or otherwise being regularly reviewed via close liaison between EP, the Client Team and the Wildlife Officer.</p> <p>Best practice guidance has been produced by the Wildlife Officer for use by EP with regard to bats and trees.</p> <p>Updated wildlife guidance notes have been produced by the N&amp;HE Team to assist call centre staff in dealing with wildlife-related enquiries from members of the public and now include information relating to non-native invasive plants and noxious weeds; this information has also been added to the Council's website.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue this role.</p> <p>Wildlife Officer to liaise with Enterprise Peterborough to highlight sites where best practice is being implemented and seek to replicate elsewhere.</p> <p>Continue this situation</p> <p>Continue this situation</p>
2	Where Council owned or managed land forms part of a wildlife corridor	An extension to conservation management has been successfully	N/A	Continue this situation

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	its management will aim to facilitate its role as a part of the ecological network it is part of.	<p>employed on Stamford road verge County Wildlife Site (CWS), Ailsworth which links with Ailsworth Marsh and Green Lane CWS.</p> <p>In addition, some financial resources have now been allocated towards extensions to the four other Road Verge CWS recommended in the Biodiversity Strategy (at Wittering, Helpston, Upton &amp; Southorpe). These have now been included within the EP contract.</p> <p>Marker posts have been installed along all of the of the city's protected verges by the N&amp;HE Team in partnership with the Wildlife Trust and EP.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	
<b>3</b>	Secure funding for enhancement works and SSSI specific management for the Council owned part of the Orton Pit SSSI.	This is the only Council owned SSSI and consists of part of the treebelt which runs along the southern edge of the Fletton Parkway. A meeting has taken place with EP, Wildlife Officer, Natural England & Froglife to discuss management options. A proposal and method statement are being developed with tree works planned for winter 2014/15.	Works are subject to availability of Trees & Woodland budget but this has been agreed to in principle. Any works will require consent from Natural England (NE).	EP to produce detailed method statement with close liaison with Wildlife Officer & NE.
<b>4/5</b>	All Council County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) to be in positive management to conserve and where possible enhance the site for the criteria for which they are designated CWS.	The re-surveying of all wildlife sites has continued during the reporting period which is in part covered under a service level agreement between the Wildlife Trust and the Council.	N/A	Continued budget allocation for SLA with Wildlife Trust.

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		<p><b>Eye Green Gravel Pit:</b> The existing management by the Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Council continues to ensure this site remains in positive management. However it should be noted that the current agreement between Council &amp; the Wildlife Trust ends in a few years' time and the Trust has a number of concerns regarding their continued involvement at this site.</p> <p><b>The Boardwalks:</b> Existing basic management has been maintained, however an updated management plan has now been produced. It is anticipated that this plan can be fully implemented upon release of s.106 funds which have been secured via the planning process and are expected to become available in 2015. Recent damage caused to the boardwalk path has resulted in the temporary closure of the site, however the Council has commissioned a structural survey &amp; is currently seeking funds to enable repairs to be implemented.</p> <p><b>Debdale pond:</b> Site is currently in good condition following restoration in 2012.</p> <p><b>Broadway Cemetery:</b> Existing management has been maintained during reporting period.</p>	<p>Concerns raised by the Wildlife Trust in relation to financial issues &amp; development pressure on the site means their future involvement is currently in question.</p> <p>Current site closure resulting from severe damage to the path structure.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Action is required to ensure the site continues to be positively managed by the Trust. Discussions will be scheduled between the Council &amp; the Trust.</p> <p>Council's Strategic Property team to secure budget to enable repairs to path &amp; re-opening of site.</p> <p>Continue this situation.</p> <p>Continue this situation.</p>

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		<p><b>Eastfield Cemetery:</b> Wildlife Site status is currently incompatible with the ongoing burials at this site. Works with respect to the wildlife site are therefore not compatible with the site's primary function. It is therefore likely to be de-designated following a review by the Wildlife Trust.</p> <p><b>Council managed ancient woodland (Pocock's Wood, Grimeshaw Wood, Highlees Spinney, Spencer's Hurn &amp; Water Spinney):</b> Following the adoption of Council's revised Trees &amp; Woodland Strategy, a new management plan has been developed for the ancient woodlands to enable their ecological restoration as well as ensuring that essential safety works are implemented in a sensitive manner. In addition, Council and EP continue to work with PECT who are leading on an Heritage Lottery Fund funded project to promote traditional woodland skills and public engagement within these woodlands.</p> <p><b>Holywell Fish Ponds:</b> Existing management has been maintained during reporting period with Peterborough Conservation Volunteers having carried out a successful habitat management task. The Cambs Bat Group also continues to monitor the site's bat population.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the Wildlife Trust will confirm the site's de-designation during 2014.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with all relevant organisations to ensure successful implementation of new management plan.</p> <p>Continue this situation.</p>

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		<p><b>Council managed County Wildlife Site Road Verges (Southey Lodge verge; Stamford Rd./Heath Rd./ Ailsworth Rd./King St. verges; Barnack road verges &amp; Bedford Purlieus-Wittering road verge):</b> Existing management has been maintained involving a cut at the end of the growing season (late September depending on weather conditions) and removal of cuttings.</p> <p>An additional cut at the start of the growing season to reduce standing grass growth has not yet been implemented.</p> <p>Following its recent designation as a County Wildlife Site, 1400 metres of verge at the south end of Highfield Road (700m of road length) has been added to the County Wildlife Site management specification for road verges.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Discussions on-going with EP, however due to current financial constraints it would appear unlikely this will be implemented in the near future.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue this situation.</p> <p>Continue to progress negotiations with EP.</p> <p>Continue this situation.</p>
6	<p>Employ best practice procedures to deal with invasive non-native species on sites of wildlife importance; or where these are on land in the Council's control and threaten habitats and species of importance or the coherence of habitat networks.</p> <p>Otherwise the occurrence of invasive</p>	<p>The Boardwalks LNR is the only relevant known site containing Orange Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. Initial treatment of Knotweed appears to have been relatively successful, however follow-up treatments are likely to be necessary for several years to effectively eradicate this species from the LNR. A quote from EP is currently being sought to carry out</p>	<p>Continued funding required during short-term to ensure full eradication of Knotweed from Boardwalks LNR.</p>	<p>EP to continue programme of treatment of Knotweed as detailed in updated five year management plan.</p>

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	non-native weed species should be reported by Council officers where this is observed as a result of carrying out their normal duties.	<p>treatment during 2013.</p> <p>Effective control of Orange Balsam is currently being achieved by Peterborough Conservation Volunteers (PCVS) on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>New Zealand Pigmyweed (<i>Crassula helmsii</i>) has been recorded at Botolph Green Pond. Initial treatment of the crassula by EP was partially successful, however Council &amp; EP are now working with the local community action group with support from the Wildlife Trust to develop a management plan for the area which has now resulted in removal of pond sediments to remove all traces of <i>Crassula</i> as part of the pond's restoration.</p>	<p>N/A effective control currently taking place.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continued financial support of PCV's.</p> <p>N/A</p>
7	Planning services of the Council to continue to work with internal advisers, conservation bodies and local groups with respect to the production of the Local Plan and also specific development proposals.	<p>The N&amp;HE Team continue to provide specific advice to both Development Control officers with regard to specific development proposals and to Planning Policy colleagues in relation to the Local Plan including policies and site allocation documents.</p> <p>The N&amp;HE Team has produced comprehensive developer guidance notes to advise applicants how biodiversity can best be incorporated into new developments and is now available via the planning section of the Council's website.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	Continue current efforts.



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		<p>The Council has worked with the Environment Agency &amp; River Nene Regional Park to produce a River Nene biodiversity opportunity report (EA funded) to help inform key strategic planning documents including the city centre plan. Priority projects are now being developed with key partners.</p> <p>PCC in partnership with the local Environmental Records Centre is keeping the key environmental characteristics of the Authority area under review in order to be able to progress the LDF and has also produced the annual monitoring report on the LDF.</p> <p>The monitoring of barn owls to the East of Peterborough has proved important in the authority's ability to consider major road and wind farm applications.</p> <p>County Wildlife Site monitoring has also had a key role to play in the ability of the authority to comply with these requirements.</p>	<p>Projects now require identification of funding sources to enable progression.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>The report will be used to inform strategic planning documents including the city centre plan. Continue to develop business cases for priority projects in partnership with other organisations.</p> <p>Support for the ERC is on-going. Continued budget allocations essential.</p> <p>A three year Service Level Agreement has been secured for the barn owl project up to 2014/15.</p> <p>Continued budget allocations for Wildlife Trust SLA essential.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p>In the short-term reasonably significant areas should be identified for trialling new approaches to landscape management.</p>	<p>A number of trials have been carried out and/or continue. These include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Un-mown wildflower verges in Barnack village centre</li> <li>• Crematorium Wildflower area.</li> <li>• Ravensthorpe habitats &amp; verges.</li> </ul>	<p>Generally these trials have been successful, however some concerns have been raised regarding the "untidy" appearance of unmown verges in Ravensthorpe and their benefits for wildlife.</p>	<p>The trial areas approach continues and positive/ negative aspects of management investigated and addressed wherever possible. Dependent upon this, expansion of management for biodiversity within a site or to another similar site can</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogsthorpe and Olive Road allotment Initiatives</li> <li>• Wildflower planting on earth bunds in Orton Malborne</li> </ul>		then be given informed and realistic consideration.
<b>9</b>	Biodiversity should be incorporated into all landscape management contracts.	<p>Biodiversity already features in a number of landscape management contracts; these include the mowing regimes of protected road verges and management of areas such as the Bluebell community area and Broadway cemetery.</p> <p>The production of biodiversity specifications for consideration at contract renewal continues to be investigated. The need to work within existing resources is however an over-riding factor.</p> <p>A specification with respect to working on watercourses with water voles was incorporated into the Drainage ditch management contract when it was renewed.</p> <p>Woodland and shelterbelt management is undertaken in a manner to sustain and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>A specification with respect to the implementation of hedge, shrub and tree works in the bird nesting season was developed as part of the update of the</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Cost element of this has been identified as key. Has to work within existing resources. Pursuit of external funding for this area unlikely to be successful.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Following concerns with respect of cost of implementation from Corporate Management</p>	<p>Support of these efforts continues.</p> <p>Ways in which further biodiversity can be incorporated at no additional cost continue to be sought.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A.</p> <p>A revised specification has been drafted and is expected to be submitted to Scrutiny Committee for</p>

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		biodiversity strategy. Key feedback from RSPB and Natural England was secured for this specification.	Team, EP has drafted a revised specification in partnership with PCC.	approval during 2014.
<b>10</b>	Production of management plans for open spaces as has been done for Central Park. In this context, where appropriate, incorporate differential grass cutting regimes in parks, verges and large open spaces.	<p>It is recommended this is linked to the trial areas discussed above. Plans will need to be written sequentially by the relevant officer to that site. It is not likely to be possible to write management plans for all sites concurrently due to the magnitude of this task.</p> <p>The City Councils ancient woodlands consisting of Pocock's, Grimeshaw &amp; Highlees Spinney have been surveyed and widespread consultation was undertaken. A management plan that will secure these valuable assets for decades to come has been produced.</p> <p>An updated draft management plan has been produced for the Boardwalks Local Nature Reserve. Tree management within the site was carried out during winter 13/14 following positive discussions and survey work by EP. A pond habitat project is also being developed in partnership with Froglife to create &amp; enhance ponds and associated habitats.</p> <p>A biodiversity assessment of Central Park has been produced in support of its green flag status.</p>	<p>The production of management plans is potentially a very time consuming process.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Many of the enhancements required to the site are unlikely to be implemented prior to 2015 when s.106 funds are expected to be released.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Progress sequentially. Investigate sources of external funding.</p> <p>Active woodland management is now being implemented in accordance with the approved management plan.</p> <p>Add business case to PCC Verto system to secure s.106 funds when available.</p> <p>N/A</p>

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		The Bereavement Services Team produced a management plan for the memorial gardens which led, at the first attempt, to the award of the Green Flag in 2009. Development of the management plan has resulted in the award of a further Green Flag awards.	N/A	Maintain this status.
<b>11</b>	The loss of trees, hedges and shrubs will be resisted unless there are sound horticultural or other reasons to indicate otherwise e.g. disease, structural damage or the shrubs are due for replacement.	This approach is specified in the new Trees and Woodland Strategy and is being applied by EP.  In addition the Natural and Historic Environment Team continue to provide this advice in relation to privately owned hedges and shrubs.	N/A  N/A	Continue current efforts.  Continue current efforts.
<b>12</b>	Where it is appropriate consideration will be made for the gradual replacement of non-native species with native species.	This has been investigated by the Officer Group; the appropriate and gradual nature of this action is viewed as being key. For example non-native shrubs could only be replaced once they have reached the end of their lifespan. There would be a significant cost element to undertaking this in advance of such a time.  Planting opportunities in the shelter belts have all been filled with native, and wherever possible locally sourced plants.	Cost of early replacement.  Limited budgets are available for this item.	Continue current efforts.
<b>13</b>	Give explicit support for small-scale community wildlife schemes, including encouraging community management of existing landscaping	PCC Natural Environment Project grants have continued. Up to 15 community wildlife schemes are supported each year.	This has been successful in the reporting period; however funding for the next reporting period has been	Wildlife Officer to make groups aware of alternative sources of funding going forward.

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	where requested and appropriate.	<p>Support for community projects has continued, as has support for projects such as Broadway Cemetery and Cuckoos Hollow groups.</p> <p>Peterborough Conservation Volunteers continue to undertake conservation tasks for Recreation Services on PCC sites and County Wildlife Sites with support from the Natural and Historic Environment Team. These have included works at the Boardwalks Local Nature Reserve as well as Barnack Grassland and Sutton Disused Railway County Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>The probation services also undertake works on semi-natural areas and Nature Reserves.</p>	<p>removed.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue to support these efforts.</p> <p>Maintain budget allocations and continue to support these efforts.</p> <p>Support to this group to continue.</p>
<b>14</b>	Recognise the role of allotments and cemeteries in promoting Biodiversity.	<p>This approach has been trialled at the Dogsthorpe allotments site. For example young offenders have undertaken a pond creation scheme with the Froglife group. This is contributing to both of the parts of this action point.</p> <p>Where allotment sites are not utilised this is very difficult to achieve.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Limited resourcing to bring disused plot back into active use.</p>	<p>This project is continuing to be supported.</p> <p>Recreation services have actively promoted allotments and allotment tenancies are continuing to increase as plots are cleared and brought into active use to meet the demand.</p>

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		<p>The Allotments Officer has produced a wildlife leaflet for allotment holders.</p> <p>In conjunction with sponsorship from Frog Life and utilising available sponsorship the tenants to various sites have constructed ponds to encourage amphibians.</p> <p>The wildlife value of cemeteries is well recognised. A wild garden of remembrance has been created at the crematorium and the Friends of Broadway Cemetery Group continue to appreciate the wildlife value of this site.</p> <p>A great deal of work to control bramble and scrub at the Broadway Cemetery Site has continued in the last reporting period.</p> <p>The wildflower area at the Crematorium continues to develop with self propagation supported by careful planting of native species. As with Eastfield Cemetery, the balance between the demands of the bereaved and supporting biodiversity needs sensitive management.</p> <p>The Children's Memorial Garden at the Crematorium is maturing well with a good mix of indigenous planting supporting a range of butterflies, bees and other</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Antisocial usage of this site continues to be a concern.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue existing management and projects.</p> <p>Continue these efforts.</p> <p>The efforts of Bereavement Services, supported by Officers from other relevant departments and bodies are ongoing.</p> <p>Continue these efforts.</p> <p>Continue these efforts.</p>

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		<p>insects. The woodland pond has naturalised well and sports its own flora and fauna.</p> <p>A management plan has been developed for Pockocks Wood with the aim of re-opening the woodland to visitors as well as enhancing the wood's wildlife value.</p>	N/A	Implement plan in partnership with EP, PECT Bereavement Services and Wildlife Officer.
<b>15</b>	Support initiatives to encourage wildlife friendly gardening, recognising the increasing amount of land devoted to this usage.	<p>School wildlife projects have been supported via the Natural Environment Projects Grants Scheme administered by the Natural &amp; Historic Environment Team and also the eco schools initiative. In the reporting period this has for example included the restoration, creation and enhancement of school ponds and wildlife areas.</p> <p>70 PCC schools have either registered, participated, or are currently working towards an eco-school award (see below). Others are actively involved in similar schemes or have developed their own action plans; PECT have their own education officer who assists schools with the scheme. Many of these schools also have school gardens and wildlife spaces.</p>	<p>None in the reporting period.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue these efforts. Also support of urban wildlife initiatives is continuing both directly and also indirectly such as those with other organisations including Froglife and the Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>Continue these efforts.</p>
<b>16</b>	With partners investigate the re-instatement of a Peterborough Wildlife Group or Wildlife forum.	This has been considered and it is now felt that it would be more appropriate at the current time to continue to focus at the parish/ neighbourhood level working with local community groups such as at	N/A	Wildlife Officer to continue to support community groups, schools and parish councils in providing targeted wildlife advice.

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		Cuckoos Hollow and Holywell Ponds.		
<b>17</b>	Establish measurable annual targets for the creation of new areas of wildlife interest.	<p>The Biodiversity Partnership continues to review and update the local Biodiversity Action Plan targets for specific habitats and species for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</p> <p>The Natural Networks partnership is investigating how the targets from the Green Grid Strategy, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plan and Peterborough Environment Audit can be brought together as one set of targets for Peterborough. If this were achieved it may be possible to further extract a set of targets for the City Council.</p> <p>PCC continues to work in partnership and support PECT in developing the Forest for Peterborough concept. The F4P Business Plan sets out specific targets for tree planting and woodland creation in the city and PCC continues to seek opportunities for new tree planting as well as monitoring the number of trees planted on its own land.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>NNP currently under-resourced to progress this further.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Support for the BP is on-going. Continued budget allocations essential.</p> <p>Consider opportunities that may arise via the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) to draw in additional funding.</p> <p>Continue to report back to PECT re numbers of trees planted.</p>
<b>18</b>	Continue to support the Environmental Records Centre (ERC) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	The centre, which is currently hosted by the Wildlife Trust and based in Cambourne, continues to receive support from PCC and other authorities and organisations in Cambridgeshire. It has completed the establishment phase funded by HLF and has progressed into a	N/A project progressing well.	Support for the ERC is ongoing. Continued budget allocations essential.



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		<p>self sustaining operation.</p> <p>The Natural and Historic Environment Team and Planning Policy have continued to support the ERC which has provided data for a number of PCC projects and reports including those associated with the Local Development Framework, Annual Monitoring Report and Single Data List (SDL)160.</p> <p>In addition, PCC receives an annually updated species data disc from the Records Centre to assist in identifying protected sites and species associated with each application. This 'front-loading' of data assists with identifying ecological issues at the outset of development and ultimately may enable developments to progress more smoothly than would otherwise be the case.</p> <p>The N&amp;HE Team has assisted in securing an HLF grant to fund a Biodiversity Outreach Officer post based at the ERC who's role has focussed on engaging people in providing species records and carrying out surveys in under-recorded areas including Peterborough.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>PCC to continue to provide environmental records to the Centre to ensure data records are as up to date and complete as possible.</p> <p>Continue this situation.</p> <p>Continue this situation</p>
<b>19</b>	Give particular emphasis to the protection of ancient and semi-natural habitats through all the City Council's activities.	The protection of these habitats continues to be emphasised in planning for example through the existence and use of policies and allocation of development sites in the	N/A	Emphasis on the protection of ancient and semi natural habitats is being continued.

	<b>Key Recommendations and Action Points from the Biodiversity Strategy</b>	<b>Update on Progress/Action underway</b>	<b>Barrier to Progress</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
		<p>Local Development Framework.</p> <p>The City Councils ancient woodland has recently been surveyed and a management plan that will secure these valuable assets for decades to come has been produced.</p> <p>Children's Services assets and school place planning team also operate a "landlord's consent" scheme whereby all schools are required to register capital works to their premises, this enables monitoring and advice to schools in respect of grounds works, planting schemes, ponds, etc. Occasionally works which are not in accordance with City Council policy or procedure, such as inappropriate felling or pruning of trees, can be intercepted via this scheme.</p> <p>Children's Services has responsibility for all trees on school sites and are in the process of going out to tender to various arboriculturists for the maintenance of the trees on a 3 year rolling programme. This will ensure that the sites are visited on a regular basis and general advice will be given, including the addition of features which will enhance the grounds as wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>Resources have now been secured via the Trees &amp; Woodland Strategy to begin implementation of the plan, however maintaining public support is essential going forward.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Implement plan whilst engaging with local community wherever possible.</p> <p>Continue efforts in this area.</p> <p>Continue efforts in this area.</p>

	<b>Key Recommendations and Action Points from the Biodiversity Strategy</b>	<b>Update on Progress/Action underway</b>	<b>Barrier to Progress</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
		<p>The Natural and Historic Environment team has led on the achievement of the National Indicator Target for Biodiversity (percentage of County Wildlife Sites in positive management). This has included close liaison with key partners such as the Wildlife Trust, Environmental Records Centre and GeoPeterborough. Peterborough Conservation Volunteers have also played a vital role in undertaking work on Peterborough sites to maintain and bring them into positive management. Within this surveys, provision of advice to landowners and activities have been carried out on behalf on the Natural and Historic Environment Team by the Wildlife Trust via a Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>Continued support for the long standing Peterborough Barn Owl recovery programme. This is now recognised as one of the most successful of these programmes in the UK. Monitoring in the last year has also included additional boxes erected in the previous reporting period which replacement those lost or which had fallen into disrepair over the last 15 years. The data from this ongoing monitoring scheme has proved crucial in the provision of advice to the Planning Department with respect to a number of strategic planning applications for</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue efforts and budget allocations in this area.</p> <p>Continue efforts and budget allocations in this area.</p>

	<b>Key Recommendations and Action Points from the Biodiversity Strategy</b>	<b>Update on Progress/Action underway</b>	<b>Barrier to Progress</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
		<p>example for wind farm proposals and public enquiries and how they would relate to this key environmental feature of the Unitary Area.</p> <p>Continued support for monitoring and habitat management for the rare four spotted moth in Peterborough. The monitoring has also allowed the extension of the neighbouring County Wildlife Site and its continued assessment as being in positive management which has directly contributed to the Single Data List 160 target included in the Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>The Natural and Historic environment team continues to play an active role with the County Biodiversity, Peterborough Natural Networks and Local Nature Partnerships.</p> <p>Operational works within the shelterbelts has been followed by chipping the cut back into the belt and the stacking of the logs for their gradual decay and production of invertebrate habitat.</p>	<p>None in the reporting period, possible concern with respect to continued budget allocations.</p> <p>None in the reporting period, possible concern with respect to continued budget allocations.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Continue efforts and budget allocations in this area.</p> <p>Continue efforts and budget allocations in this area.</p> <p>Continue efforts in this area.</p>
<b>20</b>	Investigate and exploit external funding opportunities for creating and enhancing the Biodiversity value of City Council managed land. For example from Forestry Commission, Landfill Tax or Aggregates Levy.	<p>The seeking of external funding would have to be linked to a number of actions outlined above.</p> <p>The Natural and Historic Environment team has supported the successful Skills</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Additional detail is laid out in this respect in the proposed update to the PCC biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>N/A</p>

	<b>Key Recommendations and Action Points from the Biodiversity Strategy</b>	<b>Update on Progress/Action underway</b>	<b>Barrier to Progress</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
		<p>for the Future Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund by Peterborough Environment City Trust. This included a Trainee Wildlife Officer post who was hosted within the team during 2012. Tasks included mapping and updating the woodland elements of the Green Grid Strategy as a live electronic (GIS) document and undertaking field surveys of woodland, grassland and wetland habitat networks.</p> <p>The Natural and Historic Environment team has supported the development of a Countywide pond restoration project by the County Biodiversity Partnership. Whilst an initial bid was unsuccessful, those reserves held by the BP have enabled some pond restoration schemes to be progressed in Peterborough with further works planned during winter 14/ 15.</p>	N/A	Apply to Biodiversity Partnership for suitable pond schemes in Peterborough.
21	Continue to review the use of pesticides (including fungicides and herbicides) in the City Council's land management.	<p>COSHH regulations require that this is undertaken and therefore this is ongoing for all users of pesticides.</p> <p>The use of pesticides in the Council's cemeteries has been significantly reduced and is now only used for weed control on paths and roads.</p> <p>The use of pesticides in the Crematorium gardens has been significantly reduced by</p>	N/A	N/A

	<b>Key Recommendations and Action Points from the Biodiversity Strategy</b>	<b>Update on Progress/Action underway</b>	<b>Barrier to Progress</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
		a policy of manual hoeing and weeding of the beds, etc. Pesticides are now only used for treating the roses or for weed control on paths and roads.		

## **Appendix B: Full reports from the members of the Biodiversity Officer Working Group**

### **1. Bereavement Services**

#### **Cemeteries**

- 1.1 The wildlife value of cemeteries is continuing to be recognised, the Friends of Broadway Cemetery Group continue to appreciate the site, which is a County Wildlife Site (CWS). The control of bramble and scrub is ongoing at Broadway and the evidence of wildlife has been constant since the last reporting period. A new 3 year contract has been issued to Enterprise Peterborough (EP) Tree Services Section for a programme of lifting tree canopies, clearing self-sets and bramble which started in autumn/winter 2013.
- 1.2 No further action has taken place at Eastfield Cemetery since the last report and the CWS carried out in 2009. The mowing regime has remained the same as it was felt that the cemetery is relatively new compared to Broadway and a change in the cutting regime to aid the wildlife would not be suitable. It has been noted that the sighting of rabbits and squirrels have increased in recent years. Consideration may be given to selective flora and fauna management within the older areas of the cemetery to encourage animals and wild plants.
- 1.3 Bereavement Services may put forward an application and management plan to the Green Flag Award Scheme in 2016 to try and get accreditation for Broadway Cemetery.

#### **Crematorium**

- 1.4 The wildlife area has again continued to develop. The native species are propagating well supplemented with the planting of plugs of native species. The sensitive management of the area has ensured that the compromise with the cutting regime has been accepted by the bereaved.
- 1.5 The Children's Memorial Garden continues to flourish. It is regularly maintained in a sympathetic manner which ensures it continues to attract butterflies, bees and other insects. The planned extension to the path from the garden into Pococks Wood has been shelved due to the discovery of an active badger sett along the proposed route.
- 1.6 The reopening of the old path into Pococks Wood at the eastern end, with a view to a controlled reopening of the woodland to the public, is now a step closer. The trees along the route of the path have now been made safe and funding has now been identified via the Heritage Lottery fund. (see below) With bramble cleared and the tree canopies lifted it is hopeful that native woodland plants may once again thrive.
- 1.7 The Woodland Heritage in Action (WHiA) project has been agreed between Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) and Peterborough City Bereavement Services. The partnership agreement is from 1 January 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project aims to conserve the natural heritage of Pocock's Wood and promote the cultural heritage of the associated woodland management techniques and green woodworking skills in order to preserve Peterborough's woodland heritage for future generations.
- 1.8 In conjunction with the Wildlife Officer, consideration is being given to further measures to encourage wildlife at the Crematorium.
- 1.9 Peterborough Crematorium has retained its Green Flag Status for 2013.

### **2. Children's Services**

- 2.1 Children's Services has responsibility for all trees on school sites and have recently awarded a contract for the maintenance of the trees to EP. This will ensure that the sites are visited on a regular basis and general advice will be given, including the addition of features which will enhance the grounds as wildlife habitats.
- 2.2 70 PCC schools have either registered, participated, or are currently working towards an eco-school award (see below). Others are actively involved in similar schemes or have developed their own action plans, indicated below as 'other comparable frameworks'. PECT have their own education officer who assists schools with the scheme.

Eco Schools Awards Available: Bronze, Silver, Green Flag which must be renewed every 2 years.

School Name	type of school	Eco School Award
Abbotsmede Community Primary	primary	bronze
All Saints' C of E (VA) Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Arthur Mellows Village College	academy convertor	registered
Barnack C of E Primary School	primary	silver
Bishop Creighton Academy	primary academy	registered
Braybrook Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Brewster Avenue Infant School	infant	silver
Castor C of E Primary School	primary	silver
Cavestede Early Years Centre	early years centre	1st Green Flag
City of Peterborough Academy (Free School)	free school	registered
Discovery Primary School	primary	silver
Dogsthorpe Infant School	infant	registered
Dogsthorpe Junior School	junior	silver
Eye C of E Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Eyrescroft Primary School	primary	silver
Fulbridge Academy	primary academy	bronze
Gladstone Primary School	primary	bronze
Gunthorpe Primary School	primary	bronze
Hampton College	secondary	silver
Hampton Hargate Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Hampton Vale Primary School	primary	silver
Heltwate School	special	bronze
Heritage Park Primary School	primary	bronze
Highlees Community Primary School	primary academy	bronze
Iqra Academy	secondary	registered
Jack Hunt School	secondary	silver
John Clare Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Ken Stimpson Community School	secondary	1st Green Flag
Leighton Primary School	primary	silver
Longthorpe Primary School	primary	bronze
Matley Primary School	primary	bronze
Middleton Primary School	primary	bronze
Nene Park Academy	academy sponsor led	registered
Nene Valley Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag



NeneGate School	special	coordinator some activities
Newark Hill Primary School	primary	bronze
Newborough C of E Primary School	primary	other framework
Northborough Primary School	primary	other framework
Norwood Primary School	primary	other framework
Oakdale Primary School	primary	silver
Old Fletton Primary School	primary	silver
Ormiston Bushfield Academy	academy sponsor led	bronze
Orton Wistow Primary School	primary	registered
Park House School	special	registered
Parnwell Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Paston Ridings Primary School	primary	coordinator some activities
Peakirk cum Glinton C of E Primary School	primary	bronze
Phoenix School	special	1st Green Flag
Queen's Drive Infant School	infant	silver
Ravensthorpe Primary School	primary	bronze
Sacred Heart RC Primary School	primary	2nd Green Flag
Southfields Primary School	primary	silver
St Augustine's C of E Junior School	junior	5th Green Flag
St Botolph's C of E Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
St John Fisher Catholic High School	secondary	bronze
St John's Church School	primary	registered
St Thomas More RC Primary School	primary	bronze
Stanground Academy	academy sponsor led	registered
Stanground St John's C of E Primary School	primary	registered
The Beeches Primary School	primary	bronze
The Duke of Bedford Primary School	primary	bronze
The King's School (The Cathedral School)	junior and secondary (7-19) academy convertor	silver
The Peterborough School	private (4-19)	silver
The Thomas Deacon Academy	Junior and secondary academy sponsor led	registered
Thorpe Primary School	primary	bronze
Voyager Academy	academy sponsor led	silver
Watergall Primary School	primary	registered
Welbourne Primary School	primary	bronze
Welland Primary School	primary	bronze
Werrington Primary School	primary	3rd Green Flag
West Town Primary School	primary	bronze
William Law Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag
Winyates Primary School	primary	registered
Wittering Primary School	primary	bronze

- 2.3 Children's Services assets and school place planning team also operate a "landlord's consent" scheme whereby all schools are required to register capital works to their premises, this enables monitoring and advice to schools in respect of grounds works, planting schemes, ponds, etc. Occasionally works which are not in accordance with Council policy or procedure, such as inappropriate felling or pruning of trees, can be intercepted via this scheme.
- 2.4 With a rapidly expanding school building programme at both primary and secondary level sustainable features are being incorporated wherever possible. Green roofs that encourage birds and insects are being installed for both new builds and replacement roofs. External landscaping designs are developed to provide some natural spaces both to benefit wildlife and to be an educational resource for pupils.

### 3. Climate Change

- 3.1 The last Climate Change Strategy for Peterborough was produced in 2007. The document did not contain a date detailing when the document should be revised and therefore the Climate Change team has reviewed this to determine the most appropriate way forward. The outcome of this is the development of an Environment Capital Action Plan for the city based on the concept of One Planet Living. One Planet Living is a nationally recognised scheme developed by Bioregional and WWF that covers ten themes of sustainability including Zero Carbon and Land Use and Wildlife. The plan, which contains a vision to 2050 and short term targets to 2016 went out for public consultation during the 12/13 winter.

### 4 Natural & Historic Environment

The Natural and Historic Environment Team by its nature continues to be involved with much biodiversity activity both within the Council and in partnership with external partners. A significant proportion of the team's activity is focussed in providing expert advice to the Planning Departments with respect to the development of the Local Development Framework as well as planning applications and the implementation of development within the Unitary Area.

#### 4.1 Recent/ongoing activities. These include:

- a) Leading on the achievement of the National Indicator Target Single Data List (SDL) 160 for Biodiversity which relates to the management of local sites which are in positive conservation management. This has included close liaison with key partners such as the Wildlife Trust, Environmental Records Centre and GeoPeterborough. Peterborough Conservation Volunteers have also played a vital role in undertaking work on Peterborough sites to maintain and bring them into positive management.
- b) Support to the development of the successful Skills for the Future Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund by PECT. This included the Trainee Wildlife Officer post which was hosted within the team during 2012 and included mapping and updating woodland elements of the Green Grid Strategy as a live electronic (GIS) document and undertaking field surveys of habitat networks including grasslands and wetlands. In addition, funding has been secured for one further year to include a trainee landscape officer post.
- c) Continued support for the long standing Peterborough Barn Owl recovery programme. This is now recognised as one of the most successful of these programmes in the UK. The data from this ongoing monitoring scheme has proved crucial in the provision of advice to the Planning Department with respect to a

number of strategic planning applications for example for wind farm proposals and public enquiries and how they would relate to this key environmental feature of the Unitary Area.

- d) Liaison and advice to officers and departments from across the Council with respect to Biodiversity including Highways, EP, Bereavement Services and Rights of Way officers.
- e) Surveys, provision of advice to landowners and activities carried out on behalf on the Natural & Historic Environment Team by the Wildlife Trust via a Service Level Agreement.
- f) Continued support for monitoring and habitat management for the rare four spotted moth in Peterborough. The monitoring has also allowed the extension of the neighbouring CWS and its continued assessment as being in positive management which has directly contributed to the SDL 160 target included in the Local Area Agreement.
- g) Representation of the Council with and support to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ERC which has provided data for a number of Council projects and reports including those associated with the Local Development Framework, Annual Monitoring Report and SDL 160.
- h) Representation of the Council with and support to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership and its associated projects. The work of the partnership has recently included the development of a ponds restoration project aimed at restoring at least 30 ponds across the County with at least 5 of these within the Peterborough area. Whilst the initial bid was unsuccessful, funding is expected to be made available from reserves in the Biodiversity Partnership to enable the restoration of suitable ponds in Peterborough during 2014/15.
- i) Representation of the Council within and support to the Natural Networks Partnership. This has also included supporting the successful Cambs & Peterborough Local Nature Partnership (LNP) bid and the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) bid. The team is now working closely with the RNRP to deliver this scheme within the Peterborough area.
- j) Administration and technical support to the Councils Natural Environmental Grant Scheme which has supported a significant number of projects with schools, Parish Councils and other organisations.
- k) Continued support to the planning department to enable the integration of Biodiversity into new development. This has for example included recent and ongoing developments at, Hempstead, Great Haddon as well as wind farms, road schemes and minerals and waste sites. A planning application checklist has also been produced based upon the NE standing advice for use by planning applicants and planning officers.
- l) Continued support to the Planning Policy Team with respect to the production of Local Development Framework and associated policies and documents.
- m) Liaison with and support to local conservation organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, Buglife, Froglife and the Langdyke Countryside Trust and their sites and projects.
- n) Provision of support and guidance to landowners and community groups in relation to biodiversity including Schools and Parish Councils.

- o) Provision of biodiversity education via schools liaison, interpretation, guided walks and presentations, including a bat walk and a presentation to students at Peterborough University.
- p) Support to the Peterborough Green Festival through Officer support during the planning of this event and provision of activities as part of the festival.
- q) Administration and support to the Peterborough Tree and Pond Warden Networks. The Council continued as a full member of the Tree Council and was therefore able to continue to fully support the tree Warden Network.
- r) Continued support to Peterborough Conservation Volunteers where their activities have taken place on PCC owned sites and Peterborough CWS.

4.2 **Current activities:** In addition to the continuation of many of the activities listed in 4.1 current activities and projects of note include:

- a) Leading and co-ordinating the update on annual progress against the Councils Biodiversity Strategy, which is due to be reviewed by Cabinet in April.
- b) Support to PECT with respect to the production of work and training plans for Skill for the Future placements which are being hosted with the team.
- c) Continued support to the CWS System and progression against the LAA/ National Indicator target.
- d) To work with EP and PECT in progressing the implementation of woodland management plans for the Council's ancient woodlands.

4.3 **Future Activities:** Where relevant, and budgetary approval is received, it is planned to continue activities listed in 4.1 and 4.2. Planned future activities and projects of note include:

- a) To continue to work with the project group of the Biodiversity Partnership to prepare project bids for various schemes aimed at enhancing biodiversity at several of Peterborough's CWS and ponds.
- b) To continue to work with PECT to ensure that the Skills for the Future posts hosted by the team are well recruited and a success.
- c) To work with Natural Networks partners on the Forest for Peterborough initiative.

## 5.0 **Enterprise Peterborough**

5.1 **EP Property Services:** Local Authorities have an explicit duty to consider biodiversity in the discharge of their functions. In accordance with this duty and the Councils Environmental Strategy the EP Property Services department actively champion biodiversity and sustainability in a number of ways, the majority of which are already incorporated into standard practice through the careful specification and monitoring of contracts. For example:

- ensuring trees are adequately protected when development takes place
- planting new trees for any that have to be removed when development takes place,
- the control of waste and pollution,
- the sustainable sourcing of materials,
- the temporary storage of soils that might otherwise be removed from site,
- good site fencing to ensure that areas damaged by the very disruptive nature of construction activity to a minimum

- 5.2 Additionally the department adopts a general design philosophy to provide environmentally sustainable buildings that aim where possible to encourage and enhance biodiversity. They operate under the best practise principle of 'fabric first' which involves investing in a building's built fabric, ensuring that thermal mass is incorporated and the building is well insulated, usually far in excess of the standards outlined in the Building Regulations.
- 5.3 As part of this approach they aim to included Sedum roof coverings, with between seven and twelve species of plant, which aids the control of overheating and heat loss, dependent upon the season, and has acoustic benefits as well as a long life expectancy; usually in the region of 60 years, far in excess of standard membrane roof coverings. Another recurrent theme through the Council's buildings is the design of passive ventilation systems, utilising the 'stack ventilation' methodology, allowing for cooling of the building and an influx of fresh air without the need for mechanical assistance or comfort cooling.
- 5.4 These principles can be seen on recently completed projects such as the extensions to the Key Theatre and the Hampton Hargate Primary school, both of which harness solar energy in varying capacities to supplement the building's usage. Hampton Hargate Primary school also boasts a geothermal ground source heat pump and solar thermal water heating as well as a rainwater harvesting system, ensuring efficient and responsible recycling of the building's water. Green roofs have also recently been installed at Welland Primary School and Longthorpe Primary School.
- 5.5 **EP Street Care & Grounds Maintenance:** Action in support of biodiversity & sustainability taken;
- 5.6 The G50 parkway grass cutting specification has been changed to one breed along the kerb line of 50mm to 100 mm with the remainder cut at 100mm to 200mm where it was previously 75 mm. In addition various areas across the city are now cut at 50mm to 100mm where previously they were cut at 25mm to 50mm. This not only reduces an operational carbon footprint but allows for colonisation of wildflowers.
- 5.7 The cutting regime for shrubs has been altered to flail works from the traditional cutter bar which results in a quicker operation for carbon diminution as well as a reduction in collection requirement followed by transportation to tip. In addition the tops of shrubs/hedges are not cut back between 1st March and 31st August due to the active/ nesting birds policy. A site-line cut only, on a health and safety basis, is carried out which totals 10% of the 750,000m<sup>2</sup> and the same amount for 58,000lm of hedges.
- 5.8 An agreement has been made between Betterland and City Services through which garden waste collected from the brown bins is taken and composted, the latter being used to grow plants purchased by the Authority for amenity landscaping. Recently we delivered approximately 300 tonnes of leafs, grass cuttings, bedding plants for composting.
- 5.9 The Crematorium has retained the Green Flag award within the time period with support for associated issues of sustainability. We have also retained a Green Flag award for Central and Itter Parks.
- 5.10 Central Park & Itter Park: Habitat log piles being created from recent tree works. Also, lengths of tree trunks are being left (if the site is appropriate) to degrade. Both parks have bat and bird boxes including an owl box in Itter Park. Also, the use of chemicals is really very low.
- 5.11 **EP Trees:** 70% of trees that are now planted on streets etc. are native species. The tree survey captures data about wildlife, for example bats, birds and bees. This data is entered into the tree management system. Wood from tree works is being left proactively on-site to create wildlife refuges
- 5.12 **EP Community Projects:** Manor Farm Park (aka Manor Farm Recreation Ground) has proved to be a good example of site improvement works encouraging and underpinning biodiversity. The wildflower area planted three years ago has now settled down and at dusk

three varieties of bat can be seen feeding on insects visiting the wildflower area. Also, the new pond (created in November last year) is establishing itself and once again this feature attracts bats to feed on insects. The pond will itself settle down and support wildlife in due course. The community group organised a bat walk for both adults and children in late August and this proved to be a successful evening which showed people that simple but positive work encouraged wildlife (in this case bats). Additional bat boxes have also been put in. A community orchard has been planted with native fruit trees and once again this will encourage birds and insects to visit the site. The work here has created a template for improving public open space (from the green desert) which can be used in other areas.

- 5.13 **EP Allotments:** Use of chemicals: EP encourages allotment holders to manage pests and diseases via good husbandry rather than through pesticides and herbicides. The personal preference of the site representatives tends to steer this, but overall use of chemicals has dropped in recent years.
- 5.14 **Bees and hives:** There is currently one hive on the allotment sites in the city and EP would welcome more. EP has developed a policy over the past 12 months (based on talks with other Councils and the British Beekeepers Association) that requires potential beekeepers to have undergone the Basic Assessment in Beekeeping. This develops good beehive husbandry and supports the health and welfare of the bees and minimises the risk of diseases being spread. EP requires any beekeeper to have adequate insurance and membership entitles beekeepers to comprehensive insurance at a fair price.
- 5.15 **Wildlife groups:** Froglife continue to have a plot on Dogsthorpe Road allotments, however, the often presumed non-management of plots by wildlife groups can cause internal conflict which needs to be carefully managed.
- 5.16 **Allotment management and maintenance:** There are 25 allotment sites across the city. Each has its own individual character that can range from the chaotic to the orderly. Some sites have overgrown boundaries which may not have seen any intervention for many years. Often a boundary has been allowed to grow wild to create a barrier to increase the security of a site. Many plot holders harvest rainwater for irrigation and some have small ponds on their plots. Some large plot holders will leave part of the plot to run to nettles or bramble or plant bee gardens, etc.