

ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 8
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Report of the Executive Director - Operations

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CITY COUNCIL'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY: PROGRESS REPORT 2008/9

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 PCC Biodiversity Strategy (2004).
- b) Allow feedback to be given by the Committee with respect to progress against the existing report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the progress made against the City Councils 2004 Biodiversity Strategy and to make any recommendations with regards to the future targets and aims of the Strategy.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

3.1 The 2004 strategy contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA via the LAA Biodiversity target which is based on National Indicator 197 (improved local biodiversity). It is more generally linked to the Community Strategy and National Indicators via the Cleaner/Greener agenda and sections of these documents. It has been agreed with the Greater Peterborough Partnership that reporting against the PCC 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 under the LAA Biodiversity target.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 This report is submitted to the Committee by the PCC Biodiversity Officer Working Group as a progress report for 2008/9 against the existing PCC Biodiversity Strategy. The Strategy was agreed in 2004 with a requirement for annual reporting on progress against the specific actions and targets of the strategy.

4.2 This progress report is against the 2004 PCC Biodiversity Strategy. An updated Biodiversity Strategy (2009) will shortly be brought to the Committee for consideration. This progress report should give an up to date context for the Committee when considering the proposed update to the existing 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 within the last twelve months have been achieved from within the Council's existing budgets. Future ability to progress against the 2004 strategy will be dependent on some changes to land management and maintaining existing resources where possible.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The 2004 Biodiversity report included consideration of cost and resource implications. It was made clear that the actions set out in the 2004 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 Full Council strongly reinforced this.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation and discussion has been undertaken with the Executive Director of Operations and the City Council's Biodiversity Officer Working Group.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Feedback from the Committee will be used to inform the future focus of the PCC Biodiversity Officer Working Group.
- 8.2 That the Committee uses the information contained in the progress report as a basis to consider the proposed update to the existing Biodiversity Strategy at one of its forthcoming meetings.

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 Policy Overview Committee on 2 August 2004.
- Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy (including Rural Vision Strategy and Environment Capital manifesto).

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 Peterborough City Councils Biodiversity Strategy

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
1	<p>Biodiversity should be incorporated in to all landscape management contracts/SLAs.</p>	<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 watervoles 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 is under development via the update of the current biodiversity strategy. Key feedback from RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology is being pursued in this respect.</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>Linked to the processes associated with the update of the 2004 biodiversity strategy and also essential feedback from RSPB and BTO.</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>Secure feedback from RSPB and/or BTO and take updated (2009) biodiversity strategy forward to member processes.</p>

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
2	In the short-term reasonably significant areas should be identified for trialling new approaches to landscape management.	A number of trials have been carried out and/or continue These include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunningdale trial woodland coppice area, which has continued to develop with management and new planting. • Crematorium Wildflower area • Central Park Wildflower strip • Dogsthorpe and Olive Road allotment Initiatives 	This will become clear as management of trial areas progress.	The trial areas approach continues and positive/negative aspects of management investigated. Dependant upon this, expansion of management for biodiversity within a site or to another similar site can then be given informed and realistic consideration.
3	All City 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.	A number of training session have been carried out since the strategy was first adopted these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree and woodland and street care teams have attended a training day tailored to the management functions of these teams. • Land Drainage engineers and contractors have attending training on water voles and how works can be carried out in water vole habitat. • Biodiversity Training sessions have been offered by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership and attended by PCC officers. 	N/A N/A Not all departments were available to attend.	A follow up Peterborough specific training session could be organised following adoption of an updated biodiversity strategy.
4	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	This is under investigation by the Officer group much information with respect to site management is already held. It will need to be linked to the trial areas discussed above. Plans would need to be	Linked to trial areas The production of management plans is	Trial areas approach continues. Progress sequentially. Investigate sources of external funding.

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
	and large open spaces.	<p>written sequentially by the relevant officer to that site. It would not be possible to write management plans for all sites concurrently due to the magnitude of this task.</p> <p>The City Councils ancient woodland has been surveyed and widespread consultation undertaken. A management plan that will secure these valuable assets for decades to come has been produced.</p> <p>Part of the works sponsored by Froglife at the Boardwalks Local Nature Reserve has included the production of a management specification for the site.</p>	<p>potentially a very time consuming process.</p> <p>Any changes to management will need to be achieved within existing resources.</p> <p>Implementation of the plan is reliant on existing resources and accessing external funding.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Ways in which management could be amended at no additional cost continue to be sought/investigated.</p> <p>Potential sources of external funding are identified in the plan that has been produced.</p> <p>Continue works in accordance with specification.</p>
5	Establish measurable annual targets for the creation of new areas of wildlife interest.	<p>A sub group of the Natural Networks Group has been formed to attempt to combine the Natural Environment Audit, BAP targets and Green Grid Targets. This would in effect give a Peterborough Specific Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>An LPSA project bid has been put together which includes the digitisation of the Green Grid Strategy, this would allow the effective monitoring of this strategy by the Natural Networks Group and targeting of effort.</p>	This is a potentially very time consuming process which could divert effort away from practical implementation. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plans are also in the process of being updated.	<p>Continue to work with Natural Networks targets subgroup. Progress as resources allow as the updated County BAP emerges.</p> <p>Await outcome of LPSA bid.</p>
6	Where appropriate, consider 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	Cost of early replacement.	Continue current efforts.

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
		<p>of their lifespan. There would be a significant cost element to undertaking this in advance of such a time.</p> <p>Planting opportunities in the shelter belts have all been filled with native, and wherever possible locally sourced plants.</p>		
7	<p>Give explicit support for small-scale community wildlife schemes, including encouraging community management of existing landscaping where requested and appropriate.</p>	<p>PCC Tree and Hedge Planting scheme has been reviewed and expanded to a “Natural Environment Project Grant scheme”. Up to 15 community wildlife schemes are supported each year.</p> <p>Support for community projects such as the Bluebell community garden has continued, as has support for projects such as the Dogsthorpe and Olive Road allotments, Broadway Cemetery and Cuckoos Hollow groups.</p> <p>Peterborough Conservation Volunteers continue to undertake conservation tasks for Recreation Services. These have included works at the Boardwalks Local Nature Reserve as well as Debdale and Basil Green ponds.</p> <p>The probation services also undertake works on semi natural areas and Nature Reserves.</p>	<p>This has been successful in the reporting period; confirmation of funding allocation in the next reporting period is awaited.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Dependant on future funding allocation.</p> <p>Support to these groups continues.</p> <p>Support to this group continues.</p> <p>Support to this group continues</p>
8	<p>Recognise the role of allotments and cemeteries in promoting</p>	<p>This approach has been trialled at the Dogsthorpe allotments site. For example</p>	N/A	<p>This project is continuing to be supported.</p>

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
	<p>Biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there is local support, opportunity should be taken for the utilisation of disused allotments and closed cemeteries for promoting wildlife habitats. Allotments and cemeteries that are in use have a part to play with respect to biodiversity. This is not intended to conflict with their operating requirements. 	<p>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>The Allotments Officer has produced a wildlife leaflet for allotment holders.</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 been undertaken and continued in the last reporting period.</p>	<p>Limited resourcing to bring disused plot back into active use.</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Antisocial usage of this site continues to be a concern.</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> <p>Continue existing management and projects.</p> <p>The efforts of Bereavement Services, supported by Officers from other relevant departments and bodies are ongoing.</p>
9	<p>Support initiatives to encourage wildlife friendly gardening, recognising the increasing amount of land devoted to this usage.</p>	<p>Wildlife Gardening has been a strand of the Peterborough in Bloom competition since 2006. Wildlife gardening events have been supported at the Notcutts garden centre.</p> <p>School wildlife projects have also been supported via the Natural Environment Projects Grants Scheme administered by the Natural Environment Team and also the eco schools initiative.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Support of urban wildlife initiatives is continuing both directly and also indirectly such as those with other organisations as Froglife and the Wildlife Trust.</p>

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
10	Give particular emphasis to the protection of ancient and semi-natural habitats through all the City Council's activities.	<p>The protection of these habitats continues to be emphasised in planning for example through the existence and use of local plan policies and formulation of policies and allocation of development sites in the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>The City Councils ancient woodland has been surveyed and a management plan that will secure these valuable assets for decades to come has been produced.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Implementation of the plan is reliant on existing resources and accessing external funding.</p>	<p>Emphasis on the protection of ancient and semi natural habitats is being continued.</p> <p>Potential sources of external funding are identified in the plan that has been produced and are also suggested in the proposed update to the PCC biodiversity Strategy.</p>
11	Investigate and exploit external funding opportunities for creating and enhancing the Biodiversity value of City Council managed land.	<p>All members of the Officer Group now have access to the Funding Database on the BAP partnership web pages.</p> <p>The seeking of external funding would have to be linked to a number of actions outlined above.</p>	N/A at the present time - linked to other actions.	<p>Linked to actions/areas above for which for which external funding could be sought.</p> <p>Additional detail is laid out in this respect in the proposed update to the PCC biodiversity Strategy.</p>
12	Support the proposals to establish a Biological Records Centre for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	The Biological Records Centre is now a reality. A data officer was employed by the BRC Partner organisations in October 2004. A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the County Biodiversity Partnership and BRC partners was successful and allowed the establishment of the BRC from June 2005. The centre is hosted by the Wildlife Trust and based in Cambourne. PCC and	N/A project progressing very well.	Support for the BRC is ongoing.

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
		other authorities and organisations in Cambridgeshire continue to support this centre. It has completed the establishment phase funded by HLF and has progressed into a self sustaining operation.		
13	An increasing number of organisations are establishing 'machinery rings' to share the cost of landscape management equipment between organisations.	Detailed consideration has been made by Peterborough City Services with respect to the potential for this type of working. PCS have concluded that the pool of machinery currently held is of a high standard. This is held under constant review. The grounds maintenance team for the Northern/Rural area has access to a very wide ranging pool of specialist grounds maintenance machinery and equipment. Arrangements to loan/inter exchange machinery for specific undertakings with other areas has occurred in the past and can quickly and conveniently put in place within the bounds of current rates/budgets. Other/outside contractors also undertake specific allocated works when this is considered to be advantageous. These sub contractors will mostly have their own specialist machinery/equipment or if required will be provided with machinery to ensure works are completed to the required specification. These contractors tend to be local, readily/conveniently available and are familiar with the highly competitive rates and specifications sought by contract services. PCS are therefore content that at the present time the availability of specialist	N/A	To be reinvestigated if identified as required.

	Key Recommendations and Action Points from the biodiversity strategy	Update on Progress/Action underway	Barrier to Progress	Future Action
		equipment and contractors is well served within current budget considerations.		
14	Continue to review the use of pesticides in the City Council's land management.	COSHH regulations require that this is undertaken and therefore this is ongoing for all users of pesticides.	N/A	N/A

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

1. Bereavement Services

- 1.1 In respect of Broadway Cemetery, a County Wildlife Site, further clearance of unwanted undergrowth, combined with some crown lifting, has significantly improved the visual appearance and opportunities for fauna and especially flora.
- 1.2 The trial Wildflower area at the Crematorium is progressing reasonably well but difficulties exist with public perception in this sensitive and emotional environment.
- 1.3 The Wildflower Area has been supported by selective tree, plant and bulb planting elsewhere within the Crematorium grounds.
- 1.4 The development of the Children's Woodland Memorial Garden is now progressing well with indigenous planting initially completed in the woodland area and appropriate planting currently being undertaken in and around the newly created pond. This project aims to support and improve the adjoining Pocock's Wood, an ancient woodland.
- 1.5 A management plan has been drafted for the Crematorium grounds in connection with the application for Green Flag status.
- 1.6 The Wildlife Trust is to carry out a County Wildlife Site survey at Eastfield Cemetery, during spring/summer, 2009, to assess the condition and management of the site and its continued designation as a County Wildlife Site.
- 1.7 Bereavement Services continue to seek ways of reducing the use of pesticides and has had ongoing discussions with its grounds maintenance contractor, City Services.

2. Children's Services

- 2.1 Children's Services has responsibility for all trees on school sites, enabling officers to regularly visit these and offer advice for school grounds generally, including addition of features which will enhance grounds as wildlife habitats. 35 schools have either registered, participated, or are currently working towards an eco-school award (see below); PECT have their own education officer who assists schools with the scheme.

Awards Available: Bronze, Silver, 1st, 2nd 3rd and Permanent Green flags.

School Name	type of school	Eco School Award	Date awarded/registered	Peterborough in Bloom	school garden but not in other scheme*
Abbotsmede Primary	primary	bronze	01/12/2008	yes	
All Saints C of E Junior School	primary	bronze	01/09/2008	yes	
Arthur Mellows Village College	secondary	-	-	-	
Barnack C of E Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Bishop Creighton Primary School	primary	-	-	yes	
Braybrook Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Brewster Avenue Infant School	infant	-	-	yes	
Bushfields Community College	secondary	bronze	01/01/2008	yes	
Castor C of E Primary School	primary	-	-	-	

School Name	type of school	Eco School Award	Date awarded/registered	Peterborough in Bloom	school garden but not in other scheme*
Discovery Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Dogsthorpe Infant School	infant	registered	01/11/2008	-	
Dogsthorpe Junior School	junior	silver	01/05/2008	yes	
Eye C of E Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Eyrescroft Primary School	primary	bronze	01/12/2006	-	
Fulbridge School	primary	bronze	01/11/2006	yes	
Gladstone Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Gunthorpe Primary School	primary	bronze	01/07/2008	yes	
Hampton College	secondary	registered	01/10/2008	-	
Hampton Hargate Primary School	primary	bronze	01/02/2008	-	
Hampton Vale Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Heltwate School	special	-	-	yes	
Heritage Park Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Highlees Community Primary School	primary	bronze	01/03/2008	yes	
Jack Hunt School	secondary	bronze	06/01/2008	yes	
John Clare Primary School	primary	bronze	01/01/2009	-	
Ken Stimpson Community School	secondary	registered	01/10/2008	-	
Leighton Primary School	primary	silver	01/07/2008	yes	
Longthorpe Primary School	primary	registered	16/03/2006	yes	
Marshfields School	special	-	-	-	
Matley Primary School	primary	-	-	yes	
Middleton Primary School	primary	registered	15/05/2007	-	
Nene Valley Primary School	primary	silver	01/07/2006	yes	
NeneGate School	special	-	-	-	yes - currently being developed
Newark Hill Primary School	primary	registered	01/03/2008	yes	
Newborough C of E Primary School	primary	registered	27/09/2007	yes	
Northborough Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Norwood Primary School	primary	-	-	-	newly constructed outdoor space, veg garden coming soon
Oakdale Primary School	primary	-	-	yes	
Old Fletton Primary School	primary	bronze	07/01/2009	-	
Orton Longueville School	secondary	-	-	-	
Orton Wistow Primary School	primary	registered	29/06/2006	-	
Parnwell Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Paston Ridings Primary School	primary	-	-	-	

School Name	type of school	Eco School Award	Date awarded/registered	Peterborough in Bloom	school garden but not in other scheme*
Peakirk cum Ginton C of E Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Peterborough High School	independent (4-19)	silver	12/03/2009	yes	
Phoenix School	special	-	-	yes	
Queen's Drive Infant School	infant	-	-	-	yes - currently being developed
Ravensthorpe Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Sacred Heart RC Primary School	primary	silver	01/02/2008	yes	
Southfields Infant School	infant	silver	01/09/2006	-	
Southfields Junior School	junior	silver	01/05/2007	yes	
St Augustine's C of E Junior School	junior	3rd Green Flag	01/05/2008	yes	
St Botolph's C of E Primary School	primary	bronze	01/11/2008	yes	
St John Fisher Catholic High School	secondary	-	-	-	
St John's Church School	primary	-	-	-	
St Thomas More RC Primary School	primary	-	-	-	yes
Stanground College	secondary	-	-	-	
Stanground St John's C of E Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
The Beeches Primary School	primary	registered	28/02/2006	-	
The Duke of Bedford Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
The King's School	secondary	silver	01/06/2008	-	
The Thomas Deacon Academy	city academy	registered	01/05/2008	yes	
The Voyager School	secondary	bronze	25/02/2008	-	
Thorpe Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Watergall Primary School	primary	-	-	-	yes
Welbourne Primary School	primary	bronze	01/07/2006	-	
Welland Primary School	primary	-	-	yes	
Werrington Primary School	primary	1st Green Flag	01/02/2009	yes	
West Town Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
William Law Primary School	primary	bronze	01/02/2009	yes	
Winyates Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Wittering Primary School	primary	-	-	-	
Woodston Primary School	primary	-	-	-	yes

2.2 Children's Services, Planning and Development offer advice and assistance with grants for environmental and grounds works, in particular the Tree Council grant, for which St Botolph's Primary School were successful in 2007 and 3 schools and one Pupil Referral Unit received awards in 2006. Tree planting events during National Tree Week promoted awareness and involved pupils in the planting of trees including understanding of native species.

2.3 Children's Services Planning and Development also operate a "landlord's permission"

scheme whereby all schools are required to register 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.

- 2.4 The PCC in-house school building design team have adopted the sustainability agenda with a passion. Their first project was Newborough Primary School where a sedum roof, passive ventilation, grey water recycling and PV cells were all incorporated. Orton Wistow project included all of these features and a ground sourced heat exchange system. Wherever possible these will become standard items in design. A bid was made to build a zero carbon school (the replacement Welland Primary School) but our bid was rejected, although a smaller sum was offered to incorporate other ideas. This is still being challenged.
- 2.5 Schools are funded mainly from Government grants and all funding is devolved to them to make their own management decisions. Therefore, they do not have to comply with City Council procurement regulations. This means that they can use their own preferred contractors, and are free to specify and order works. There may be occasions where schools are acting outside of the City Council's policies practices for preserving biodiversity, although hopefully this would be quite rare and would be checked via the landlords consent scheme.
- 2.6 All trees on school sites are managed by City Services, Parks, Trees and Open Spaces Department. This enables closer monitoring of school grounds and from this may lead to the acquisition of additional school grounds maintenance contracts, thus ensuring that a greater proportion of schools will be managed in accordance with City Council policy.

3. Environmental Quality

- 3.1 An annual garden competition has been co-ordinated for the last 3 years, 2009 being the forth year, this includes a wildlife friendly category. This receives a steady percentage of entrants and the gardens are judged on a wide variety of elements, all contributing to biodiversity.
- 3.2 During 2008 and again in 2009 we will attend several road-show style events across the city to promote the Peterborough in Bloom campaign, this includes several elements which are quite interactive include planting seeds, different native herbs etc. We get several hundred visitors to the road-shows and they are very effective ways of conveying messages.
- 3.3 Campaigns by the City Council recycling team on composting and growing your own goes alongside the huge rise in uptake of allotments across the city which was also the theme of this years Green festival.
- 3.4 The climate change strategy refresh is currently underway. This is required due to the pace of work in the climate change area which means that parts of the 2006 strategy are now out of date. The new strategy is proposed to be city wide and will encompass work on mitigation and adaption to climate change across many subject areas including biodiversity.
- 3.5 The Green backyard is an exciting new project in the heart of Peterborough which aims to teach people how to reduce their impact upon the environment, this includes growing their own fruit and veg. The project is currently located at the ex allotment site at London Road but a new, longer term home is currently being progressed. In the future the project aims to create a wildlife haven in the city centre, demonstrating how you can make the most of small spaces to grow your own food and provide habitats for local wildlife. The project will also be aiming for organic certification once the final location is agreed.

4 Natural Environment Team

The Natural Environment Team by its nature continues to be involved with much biodiversity

activity both within the City 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) Support to the Peterborough Green Festival for example through Officer support to the planning of this event, provision of activities at the launch of the Festival day in Cathedral Square, as well as during the duration of the rest of the festival.
- b) Administration and support to the Peterborough Tree and Pond Warden Networks. The City Council continued as a full member of the Tree Council and was therefore able to continue to fully support the tree Warden Network.
- 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. 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 14 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 example for major road and wind farm proposals 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 City Council with respect to Biodiversity. In addition to those specifically represented on the Biodiversity Officer Working Group these also for example include highways and drainage engineers.
- e) Surveys, provision of advice to landowners and activities carried out on behalf on the Natural 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. This has been particularly valuable in the reporting period in the provision of advice to the planning department with respect to the proposed development of a neighbouring site. The monitoring has also allowed the extension of the neighbouring County Wildlife Site and its assessment as being in positive management which has directly contributed to the National Indicator 197 target included in the Local Area Agreement.
- g) Representation of the City Council with and support to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre which has provided data for a number of PCC projects and reports including those associated with the Local Development Framework, Annual Monitoring Report and National Indicator 197.
- h) Representation of the City Council with and support to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership and its associated projects. The work of the partnership has recently included the provision of grant aid for hedge planting in Ufford Parish which will increase the robustness of associated County Wildlife Sites thereby directly contributing to the achievement of the NI 197 target within the Local Area Agreement. The link between the Biodiversity Partnership and the Natural Networks Partnership was formalised in the reporting period.
- i) Representation of the City Council within and support to the Natural Networks Partnership. The link between the Natural Networks Partnership and the Greater Peterborough Partnership was formalised in the reporting period. This included agreement that reporting by the Natural Networks partnership against the Peterborough Green Grid strategy could be used by GPP to demonstrate the breadth of action taking place with respect to Natural Environment Issues.
- j) Administration and technical support to the City 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, Hampton Leys as well as wind farms road scheme and minerals and waste sites such as Must Farm.

- l) Continued support to the Planning Policy Team with respect to the production of a sustainable and robust Local Development Framework, through both the formulation of policy and the process of allocating sites for development.
- m) Liaison with and support to local conservation organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, Buglife and Froglife and their projects.
- n) Support of “Week of Action” activities organised by the neighbourhood investment team.
- o) Provision of support and guidance to landowners and community groups in relation to biodiversity, this has included for example the groups at Cuckoos Hollow, Broadway Cemetery and Ufford Parish Council.
- p) Provision of biodiversity education via schools liaison, interpretation, guided walks and presentations.
- q) Support to the development of an “Access to Nature” project/s for Peterborough via a partnership project and funding bid for lottery funding via Natural England. This bid is currently under consideration following feedback from Natural England.
- r) Work carried out in Partnership with Froglife and Peterborough City Services at the Boardwalks Local Nature Reserve. This has included removing significant overshadowing by willows around the ponds in the site and will conclude with excavation of material from the ponds in the autumn. This has directly contributed to the positive management of this site and therefore the achievement of the Biodiversity target under the LAA.
- s) Continued support to Peterborough Conservation Volunteers where their activities have taken place on PCC owned sites.

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 on the update of the City Councils 2004 Biodiversity Strategy, this is now reaching the end of external consultation.
- b) Leading the Biodiversity Officer Working Group with respect to the implementation of the existing biodiversity strategy.
- c) Preparation of a Local Public Service Agreement bid to the Greater Peterborough Partnership. This is for a project in two phases. The first being the capture of the Peterborough Green Grid Strategy as an electronic/live document. This would allow the effective monitoring of the strategy and support the focussing of resources/project bids by the Natural Networks Partnership. A second phase of the project would add further detail to habitat network mapping previously undertaken with the Biological Records Centre which would further refine the level of ecological detail available within the Green Grid strategy.
- d) Continued support to the County Wildlife Sites System. It was recently agreed with the Wildlife Trust that the Natural Environment Team would take over the lead role in Peterborough for this target. As such the Natural Environment Team leader now attends meetings of the Environment Capital group of the Greater Peterborough Partnership.

4.3 **Future Activities:** Where relevant and budgetary approval is received it is planned to continue activities listed in 4.1 and 4.2 such as the Natural Environment Projects Grant. Other planned future activities and projects of note include:

- a) Support with respect to the launch of the new PCC website and production of updated Natural Environment WebPages.
- b) To work with a project group of the Biodiversity Partnership to prepare a project bid for pond restoration across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- c) To continue to work with Ufford Parish Council with respect to Natural Environment issues and the preparation of any funding bid for further hedge planting.
- d) To finalise the updating of the 2004 Biodiversity Strategy and associated member processes.

5.0 Property Design and Maintenance

- 5.1 Local Authorities have an explicit duty to consider biodiversity in the discharge of their functions. In accordance with this duty and the City Councils Environmental Strategy the Property Design and Maintenance division 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
 - re providing any trees 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 At a design level specific features within recent developments have included a green roof at Newborough and at Orton Wistow School where there are also ground sourced heat pumps, topsoil mounding, sustainable drainage creating temporary damp areas and rain water harvesting.
- 5.3 Green Roofs are now being included on most major schemes and this includes proposed sedum roofs on extensions at Hampton Hargate and Woodston Junior School as well as on Children’s Centres at Duke of Bedford School, Thorney and Eye Primary School. At Hampton Hargate discussions are in hand with Buglife with a view to upgrading biodiversity value by developing a brown roof to mimic the rapid colonisation found on many brown field sites. Planting schemes at schools and new childrens centres, apart from being wildlife friendly, have also included growing willow structures which provide educational play opportunities.
- 5.4 Procedurally we shall be looking to include a simple biodiversity audit within feasibility studies and the inclusion of appropriate wildlife friendly features within new schemes e.g. nesting features, roosting plates, bat boxes and bricks.
- 5.5 Waste management plans are now a feature of all construction work.
- 5.6 By designing with the ethos of removing the need to consume electrical energy for lighting and ventilation, we seek to make significant reductions on existing and new buildings potential carbon footprint thus having a positive environmental impact in the short and long term.

6.0 PETERBOROUGH CITY SERVICES

BIODIVERSITY SITES – AND/OR ACTION TAKEN OR PLANNED 2008/9

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
6.1	<p>HIGHWAYS DESIGNATED PROTECTED WILD FLOWER VERGES – RURAL</p> <p>Examples: Barnack Drift Wittering Road Bonemills Farm Road The Drift, Sutton Station Road Castor Mill Lane, Castor Marholm Road</p>	<p>The City Council continues to protect the stated verge by only cutting once per year in Sept/Oct and removing the cuttings.</p>	<p>This protection will continue Parish councils, in consultation with Highways, are currently considering areas they may wish to include subject to any grant applications being successful.</p>

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
	<p>Helpston Road Ufford/Stamford Road Heath Road</p> <p>In addition to the above – all other rural verges (non-wild flowers) over 1 metre in width are cut back once per year during the Autumn months.</p>	<p>For health and safety reasons, all verges must have 3no. 1.2 metre width cuts, this included all sightlines. These cuts are carried out in the Spring/Summer months.</p>	
6.2	<p>NATURALISED WILD AREAS Examples: Hastings Road Hardings Field, Walton Naturalised roundabout near old Brotherhood site – Lincoln Road/Soke Parkway/Paston Parkway join up point</p>	<p>The City Council continues to protect the naturalised areas where no maintenance is carried out where possible apart from removal of litter and rubbish.</p> <p>In Potters Way, a third of the area has been turned into a natural area.</p> <p>Freston, Paston large play area includes several wildflower mounds</p> <p>Stanley Rec a wildlife area established in conjunction with the Friends of Stanley Rec</p> <p>Summer wildflower area in Itter Park currently maintained by the City Council with the Friends of Itter Park showing an interest.</p>	<p>This protection will continue</p> <p>As part of the new development at the Fengate former sewage works site a new marshland area will be created on land in ownership of both the current developer and the City Council.</p>
6.3	<p>NATURALISED WILD AREAS – PONDS</p> <p>Naturalised Setting Ponds adjacent to Werrington/Glinton A15 Basil Green Pond Holywell Pond Debdale Pond Orton Pond (Cherry Orton) Woodfield Park Pond Eye (Parnwell Way) Roundabout Pond Melrose Drive Settling Ponds</p>	<p>In the area of Holywell Pond wildflower planting has taken place.</p> <p>Work has also been undertaken to improve the condition of the ponds via clearance work. All clearance work undertaken was carried out in such a way as to leave wildlife in situ and replacement pond vegetation undertaken to</p>	<p>The work already undertaken at various ponds will in itself encourage regeneration of both existing and new species.</p> <p>A rolling programme of pond maintenance will be introduced for future years and the involvement of community groups will be encouraged.</p>

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
	<p>Ponds on various allotments e.g. Westwood Grange allotments, Dogsthorpe allotments</p>	<p>encourage natural regrowth. Any vegetation removed from the water had been left in situ for regeneration and encouragement of wildlife.</p> <p>Peterborough Conservation volunteers have been carrying out work such as coppicing and cutting back of undergrowth which is left on site as habitat piles.</p> <p>Itter Park a wildlife area established in conjunction with the Friends of Itter Park who are currently maintaining this facility.</p>	<p>Wesleyan Road allotments – frog life to establish pond on double plot.</p> <p>Paston Brook – ongoing wildlife observations.</p>
6.4	<p>NATURAL PONDS. LAKES AND WETLAND AREAS</p> <p>Examples: Eye Green Nature Reserve Cuckoos Hollow Boardwalks Holywell Ponds Fletton Lake</p>	<p>As above</p> <p>A number of voluntary groups/organisations have undertaken work on these locations to the benefit of the community.</p> <p>In addition extensive improvement works to Cuckoos Hollow undertaken as a result of joint financing from Environment Agency and PCC.</p> <p>Similar works were also undertaken at Holywell Ponds and Boardwalks.</p>	<p>As above</p> <p>The City Council will encourage voluntary groups/organisations to continue their interest in these facilities.</p> <p>For the Boardwalks, following the negotiations with the Wildlife Officer, Nene Park Trust will provide stakes and willow binders for the laying of the hawthorn hedge which will be carried out by Peterborough Conservation volunteers. In addition Froglife have obtained funding to excavate existing ponds to improve facility and subject to funding extend the existing number of ponds. Other appropriate landscaping works will be considered and undertaken subject to funding and/or City Councils current bio diversity policy.</p>
6.5	<p>WILD FLOWER AREAS</p> <p>Spring Wildflower</p>	<p>The protection offered is where the in-situ grasses</p>	<p>This protection will continue. However to more</p>

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
	<p>verges Examples: Both sides of cycle way Foxcovert Walk, Werrington Stanground roundabout slip road onto Frank Perkins Parkway (Cowslips)</p> <p>Summer Wildflower open spaces Examples: Hastings Road/Hardings Field, Walton Cuckoos Hollow, Werrington Castor High Street Verges Central Park Hartwell Way</p>	<p>and broadleaf species are cut and cleared once per year in June/July</p> <p>The protection offered is where the in-situ grasses and broadleaf species are cut and cleared once per year in Sept/Oct. New areas are being introduced this year to highway land adjacent to Soke Parkway (rear PC World), Itter Park around the trees near the tennis courts and the old filled in recreation bark pit are adjacent to Ambleside Gardens/Baron Court Gunthorpe, Werrington</p> <p>The Westwood and Ravensthorpe development trust have taken over the development and maintenance of the Hartwell Way summer wildflower area at present.</p>	<p>fully develop wildflower areas consideration needs to be given as to how we continue to maintain these areas in the future.</p> <p>This protection will continue. However to more fully develop wildflower areas consideration needs to be given as to how we continue to maintain these areas in the future.</p>
6.6	<p>SHRUB CUTTING BACK All the City Council's shrubbed areas together with hedges both formal and natural are generally only cut back once per year between 1 September and end of February so as to comply with legislation in respect of nesting birds. Shrub prunings etc are recycled back into the shrub beds – reduces the use of chemicals and increases ground life habitat.</p>	<p>The City Council is required to have a mind to health & safety, whilst at the same time comply with the bird nesting legislation. Accordingly all sight lines and overhanging vegetation will be cut back as and when required and in accordance with the legislation above.</p>	<p>The City Council is committed to replacing all its shrubs over a 90-year programme. This replacement programme will place emphasis on the requirement to use shrubs more suitable to each residential area.</p> <p>In addition consideration will be given to removal of shrubs in certain areas, e.g. sightlines, with replacement back to grassed areas.</p>
6.7	<p>TREES</p> <p>The green infrastructure is a network of interlinked spaces in and around the city, and between urban and rural areas. Trees and woods are a very important part of this, and playing a vital role in defining Peterborough as an "Environment City".</p>		

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
	<p>Trees and woodland, especially old tree and ancient woods, are amongst our richest habitats. The highest levels of biodiversity are often found in woods that are actively and sensitively managed. Their diversity is even greater when they form part of a mixed landscape with proximity and access to other features such as ponds and lakes, grassland and even residential gardens.</p> <p>The challenge in the future will be to maintain and enhance diversity. Planning and management needs to be conscious of providing a natural environment which is resilient to climate change.</p> <p>We can expect to see change in the natural range of native wild plants and animals, which will alter the character of our woods. Some wildlife, particularly invasive, non-native species will need to be managed if they are not to have a detrimental effect on our woods.</p> <p>Protecting water from pollution, by intercepting it before it reaches watercourses is a key element of landscape management. Strategically planted woods and trees (such as Peterborough's urban woods and street trees) can intercept air pollutants.</p> <p>As part of an integrated and multi-functional land use will require close working across the City Council and with external partners and multiple landowners as we consider the impact and benefits to surrounding land use.</p>		
6.7.1	<p>TREE BELTS, WOODLAND AREAS All tree prunings etc are recycled back into tree belts and woodland areas to reduce the use of chemicals and increase ground life habitat.</p>	<p>The City Council continues to expand its trees and woodlands areas and, in particular, Crichtons Wood has again been expanded by 1,500 oak trees, 22 trees on Belvoir Way, 28 trees in Woodfield Park, 12 at Pickle Copse, 15 at Welland Rec, 10 at Westwood Grange allotments, 14 at Orton Wistow, 10 in Werrington North, 20 at Bishops Road</p> <p>Where the City Council has to remove any tree, it currently replaces that one tree with two.</p> <p>Action plan for Spinney Wood in place.</p> <p>During 2008 Westwood and Ravensthorpe Development Trust have created a number of footways through Spinney Wood, completed clearance of litter etc and replaced a number of trees with plans to continue with</p>	<p>Planting at Crichtons Wood – discussions on-going with a view to further expand on the initiatives already taken.</p> <p>Review the open space within Thorpe Meadow and create small woodland copses, with walkways designed so as to provide maximum accessibility and enjoyment of natural wooded areas with a greater emphasis on indigenous trees.</p> <p>Look to implement the City Council's proposed Trees and Woodland Strategy in respect of a programme of works for proper woodland management with particular emphasis on regeneration arising from coppicing to develop the trees in situ, which will improve the natural habitat within these areas. Consider additional planting of hedging such as hawthorn to provide wind barriers to the shelter belts.</p>

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
		<p>this particular activity.</p> <p>A managed programme of works to tree belts etc to improve sight lines, reduce encroachments and encourage bio diversity in the under storey.</p>	<p>This is evident on Boongate</p>
6.7.2	<p>TREES – STREET TREES</p> <p>All tree prunings from street trees are removed and recycled into tree belts throughout the city where possible</p>	<p>In the last six months a programme of tree works has commenced which provides for a 2 metre crown raising and removal of epicormic growth on all street trees throughout the city.</p> <p>During the financial year 2008/09 an additional 240 trees were planted</p>	<p>Review the species of trees being specified in future planning applications so as to ensure the trees being provided are appropriate for its purpose and are planted in suitable locations so as to allow for their natural development.</p> <p>A two-year programme of tree works will be undertaken which provides for a 2 metre crown raising and removal of epicormic growth on all street trees throughout the city.</p>
6.7.3	<p>TREES – GREEN OPEN SPACES</p> <p>All tree prunings from street trees are removed and recycled into tree belts throughout the city where possible.</p> <p>These are areas where community initiatives are actively encouraged and a number of community grants have been awarded.</p>	<p>In the last six months a programme of tree works has commenced which provides for a 2 metre crown raising and removal of epicormic growth on all trees in green open spaces throughout the city.</p> <p>On the Embankment (Pickles Copse) has been created and will be developed over future years. The local Sea Cadets have applied for funding to develop this initiative.</p>	<p>Review the species of trees being specified in future planning applications so as to ensure the trees being provided are appropriate for its purpose and are planted in suitable locations so as to allow for their natural development.</p> <p>A two-year programme of tree works will be undertaken which provides for a 2 metre crown raising and removal of epicormic growth on all trees in green open spaces throughout the city.</p>
6.8	<p>PARKS & OPEN SPACES</p> <p>At each of the following parks bio-diversity activity is undertaken according to its size, location and use. These are areas where community initiatives</p>	<p>The City Council now has Green Flag awards on its two main parks – Central Park and Itter Park.</p> <p>Educational activities with local schools and the</p>	<p>From the lessons learnt in Central Park, additional nesting boxes for small birds, owls and bats, will be installed throughout other parks and recreation areas via community groups and</p>

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
	<p>are actively encouraged and a number of community grants have been awarded.</p> <p>Examples: Central Park Itter Park Bretton Park Bretton Park Composting facility Fletton Rec Woodfield Park Embankment</p> <p>Recreation Grounds Sycamore Avenue Rec Stanley Rec</p>	<p>Wildlife Trust are undertaken and encouraged. During wildlife events, regular net sweeping activities are undertaken which shows that the natural wildlife in these areas is increasing.</p> <p>With the exception of the fine turfed areas (bowling greens etc) all weeding activity is undertaken manually and no chemicals are used. Compost from the City Council's composting facility at Bretton Park is used on the bedding areas.</p>	<p>schools.</p> <p>In addition, we will be looking to develop natural habitat areas to encourage a greater diversity of wildlife.</p> <p>In Itter Park new wildflower areas will be created together with a Sensory garden, working with the Voyager School and particularly the visually impaired division. This will include art sculptures etc. The 'Friends of Itter Park' are hoping, with the assistance of the City Council and funds they have raised, to create several wildlife areas</p>
6.9	<p>ALLOTMENTS</p> <p>The management of the City Council's allotments encourages the allotment holders to encourage bio-diversity. The City Council provides compost from its composting facility in Bretton Park. Tree chippings are also provided to allotment holders for footpaths etc.</p>	<p>Continuing to encourage the use of composted and recycled materials for allotment holders to collect rainwater, build composting facilities.</p> <p>Also looking at alternative use for allotment sites where there is no demand.</p> <p>During 2008 plots have been developed to encourage participation by disadvantaged groups particularly disabled groups. A number of organisations have been actively involved with the City Council in particular Froglife, Orton Cubs, Nacro, Bridgegate Services, NHS,</p>	<p>The City Council no longer carries out any spraying activities in the general areas and vacant plots within allotment sites and is now looking to implement a policy to discourage the use of any chemicals by allotment holders.</p> <p>Arrangements are well advanced with a view to leasing one acre of vacant allotment land to the Greater Dogsthorpe Environmental Forum for the development of a community garden initiative.</p> <p>Allotment Association is developing plans for a community orchard at Paston.</p> <p>Orton Goldhay have a wildlife area which they have established on site.</p> <p>Olive Branch Community Group are trying to establish a community garden on the Olive Road Allotment site.</p>

Reference	Previous Actions	Current Actions	Planned/Future Actions
			Developing plans to improve re use and recycling on the allotments.
6.10	<p>GRASS</p> <p>The City Council maintains a substantial amount of grass areas:</p> <p>G25 - 3,654,216 sq.m G50 – 1,391,311 sq.m G100 – 101,879 sq.m</p> <p>and needs to balance its grass cutting operations between the wishes of some who like to see nicely manicured lawns throughout the city and others who like to see a balance of well cut grass through to grassed areas to encourage wildlife.</p> <p>Within these categories the City Council have a non spraying policy which will mean there will be a broad leaf species content. (all grass areas on these 3 categories the grass is flown and not collected.)</p>	<p>The City Council now maintains this balanced view by the following cuts:</p> <p>G25 – minimum cut 25mm-75mm G50 – minimum cut 50mm-100mm G100 – minimum 100mm-300mm</p> <p>In some cases all three categories will be used on a specific open space, e.g. Hodgson Avenue/David’s Lane.</p> <p>We now only allow fine turf cuts (below 25mm) to specialised areas so as to comply with particular sporting requirements, e.g. bowling green, tennis courts etc.</p>	<p>A review will be undertaken over the next few years to ascertain whether or not any of the current categories of grass would be more suited to being changed to natural areas. It is unlikely that these areas will be close to residential locations as previous pilots have proved to be unsuccessful.</p>