

VISION STATEMENT

The working group has developed the following updated vision of what the Council's approach to Biodiversity should be:

PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL AND BIODIVERSITY

a) **Our vision**

- i) The Peterborough area has a rich mix of habitats including woodland, parkland, rivers, and alluvial and limestone grassland. Peterborough's Natural Environment Audit identifies approximately 10% of the district is of at least county significance for its wildlife and 2% of the area as of national importance. This includes 3 sites which are also of international importance. Peterborough City Council wants to see its district remain rich in wildlife, with existing habitats of value safeguarded for future generations and new features for wildlife created wherever possible.
- ii) Peterborough City Council is committed to the Peterborough Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. It recognises that biodiversity is a key part of the LAA, Community Strategy and its component parts such as the Rural Vision Strategy and Environment Capital manifesto.
- iii) The City Council recognises that Biodiversity and the Natural Environment enhance wellbeing and quality of life by enhancing the places in which we live, work and play. It can give economic benefits through tourism and the production of quality local produce. Natural habitats can absorb floods, help treat pollutants and act as windbreaks. There are also cultural and aesthetic aspects to Biodiversity, for example through the writings of John Clare.
- iv) The City Council recognises that Biodiversity – or more simply the wealth of wildlife is a truly cross-cutting theme. The City Council will, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity¹. As such it will be included in all Council strategies, plans, programmes and practices.
- v) The City Council recognises that biodiversity is under threat from habitat and population fragmentation, climate change, invasive alien species as well as development and land pressures. The City Council will play its part in countering these threats, working to protect and enhance, sites, habitats and species of biodiversity importance, including the protection and provision of a network of wildlife corridors to establish physical links between sites and populations of known wildlife interest.
- vi) The City Council will work with partners to achieve a net gain in Biodiversity in the district by protecting these key habitats, species, and habitat networks; mitigating against potentially damaging impacts; seeking compensation where damage is unavoidable; and enhancing existing or creating new habitats of value wherever possible.

b) **Our approach**

To achieve this vision for Biodiversity the City Council adopts the following broad approach, in that it will take reasonable steps which are consistent with the proper exercise of the authorities functions to:

- i) **Awareness raising:** Make every attempt to ensure that employees and members of Peterborough City Council are aware of the importance of and need to

¹ As required by section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

safeguard, enhance and promote Biodiversity through the City Council's activities and thereby contribute to the achievement of this approach.

- ii) **Habitat networks and Climate Change:** Work with the Peterborough Natural Networks partnership and contribute to the achievement of the green grid strategy to form a coherent and less fragmented green infrastructure network of habitats across the authority area²; which will be robust to the effects of and facilitate adaptation to climate change by species and habitats.
- iii) **Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Take reasonable steps consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions,** to further the conservation and enhancement of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and International Sites³.
- iv) **County Wildlife Sites:** Work with the Wildlife Trust and Local Sites partnership to further the conservation and enhancement of Local Wildlife Sites. Also to ensure that up-to-date information is available for all local wildlife sites in Peterborough and work with partners to deliver the targets of the Local Area Agreement and Community Strategy with respect to Local Wildlife Sites.
- v) **Non native invasive species:** Take action to deal with invasive non native species where these are present on sites of wildlife importance; or where these are on land in the authorities control and threaten habitats and species of importance or the coherence of habitat networks.
- vi) **The Planning system:** Ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced within the planning system within Peterborough and deliver the key principles for biodiversity set out in national planning guidance. Where full protection is not possible mitigation and compensatory measures should be put in place.
- vii) **Green Spaces:** Increase and diversify wildlife interest in all green places and open spaces; and provide access to sites of wildlife interest for all sections of the community, including the disabled and disadvantaged. Also to promote accessibility to wildlife by creating these new habitats in public areas and encourage their creation in private areas such as, schools, factories, offices.
- viii) **Wider understanding:** Promote wider understanding and enjoyment of Peterborough's wildlife through formal and informal education and interpretation, and events such as Peterborough's annual Green Festival.
- ix) **Involvement:** Promote active interest and involvement in wildlife issues at the local, national and international levels by all sections of the community at home, in the workplace, as a leisure activity and as part of the local economy.
- x) **Local wildlife groups:** Assist local voluntary wildlife groups in their aims of protecting wildlife and promoting interest in conservation.
- xi) **Biodiversity Action Plan targets:** Contribute to the achievement of the Biodiversity Action Plan Targets relevant to the authorities functions and area (please see appendix C). To continue to support the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership.
- xii) **Biodiversity Data:** Ensure that up to date biodiversity data is available and used appropriately to support this approach.

Actions to achieve this vision and broad approach are described in more detail in appendix B.

² As required by Regulation 37 of the Habitats Regulations.

³ As required by Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).