

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
10 JANUARY 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Simon Machen - Corporate Director Growth and Regeneration	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Hiller - Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development	
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PCC BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY (Draft for consultation)

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Corporate Director Growth and Regeneration	Deadline date: <i>Cabinet 15 January 2018</i>
<p>It is recommended that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and make any recommendations in respect of the draft Biodiversity Strategy prior to its referral to Cabinet; any recommendations made by the Committee will be reported to Cabinet for its consideration. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 The current Biodiversity Strategy was adopted at Full Council in 2010 and now is considered to be an appropriate time to review the Strategy. The refreshed strategy aims to retain the existing vision and approach, revise actions already completed and add new actions where appropriate, as well as provide a clearer structure to the strategy.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain the Committee's views and comments on the draft Biodiversity Strategy (See Appendix 1) which is being presented to Cabinet on 15 January 2018. Cabinet will be asked to approve the draft Strategy for the purpose of public consultation, The Strategy will, on adoption, provide set out the Council's approach towards discharging its biodiversity duty. Officers propose to consult with the public and stakeholders on the draft Strategy in Spring 2018.
- 2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council : Environmental Capital.
- 2.3 This Strategy is linked to the implementing the Environment Capital agenda and associated outcomes including improving Peterborough's natural environment and advising on biodiversity.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	YES	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	15th January 2018
Date for relevant Council meeting	Late 2018 (date to be confirmed)	Date for submission to Government Dept.	n/a

4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The current Biodiversity Strategy was adopted at Full Council in 2010 and now is considered to be an appropriate time to review the Strategy. The new strategy aims to:

- Retain the existing Vision and Approach;
- Revise actions already completed and add new actions where appropriate;
- Provide a clearer structure to the strategy (helped by Defra's recommendations as to how public authorities can show regard for biodiversity) under four key headings:
 - 1) Promoting Biodiversity in Planning;
 - 2) Showing Regard for Biodiversity on Public Authority Managed Land & Buildings;
 - 3) Protected Sites;
 - 4) Green Infrastructure.

4.2 Of particular note in terms of proposed revisions since the 2010 version, Members attention is drawn in particular to:

- The strategy is now more closely aligned with that set out in the new draft Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity SPD
- Greater emphasis on habitat connectivity, reflecting current Government guidance and policies
- Seeking to expand areas of open space managed to benefit wildlife and bringing existing wildlife sites into more beneficial management
- Summary report setting out Council's progress against delivery of the objectives set out in the strategy to be included in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 None to date.

5.2 Subject to Cabinet approval on 15 January 2018, officers propose to consult on the draft Strategy in Spring 2018. That public consultation will allow officers to collect views from environmental organisations and other interested parties. The public will be invited to comment, though due to the technical nature of the document, it is more likely that comments will be received from those involved in environmental sector.

6. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

6.1 It is anticipated that Scrutiny Committee will offer comments on the attached draft strategy, for Cabinet consideration, with Cabinet anticipated to approve the consultation draft version of the Biodiversity Strategy for public consultation in Spring 2018. Following public consultation, the SPD will be amended accordingly and then, ultimately, will be recommended to Full Council for adoption later in 2018.

7. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 In exercising its functions, the Council has a duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. It is important therefore that the Council sets out a clear strategy to ensure biodiversity is considered in all Council

strategies, plans, programmes and practices. The Council's constitution determines that the Strategy is a 'major policy item', and therefore can only be adopted in due course by Full Council. Prior to that, Cabinet is able to approve a draft for consultation.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Alternative options considered were:

Option 1 - do not update the 2010 Biodiversity Strategy. This which would represent a missed opportunity to: refresh the now outdated list of actions; present information in a clearer format; and reflect current Government advice. As such, this is not the preferred option.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 The Strategy is not intended to introduce financial implications for the Council, but instead to provide guidance to assist with meeting current legislative and policy requirements.

Legal Implications

9.2 The Strategy is not intended to introduce legal implications for the council or developers, but instead to provide guidance to assist with meeting current relevant environmental legislation.

Equalities Implications

9.3 *None anticipated.*

Rural Implications

9.4 *None anticipated.*

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

10.1 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 40)

The Biodiversity Duty for Public Authorities, Defra Guidance, 2014

Peterborough City Council Approach to Biodiversity submitted to the Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee in 2010

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, Defra 2011

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Draft PCC Biodiversity Strategy.

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