

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
19 NOVEMBER 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Simon Machen - Corporate Director of Growth and Regeneration	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Peter Hiller - Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning and Economic Development	
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PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Corporate Director of Growth and Regeneration	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that Cabinet recommends the Biodiversity Strategy to Full Council for approval.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following consideration by the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2018 and Cabinet 15 January 2018, prior to four weeks public consultation from 2 March to 29 March 2018.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the City Council's updated Biodiversity Strategy for the Cabinet to consider and if appropriate to refer it to Full Council for consideration as part of the major policy framework.
- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.1, *'To take collective responsibility for the delivery of all strategic Executive functions within the Council's Major Policy and Budget Framework and lead the Council's overall improvement programmes to deliver excellent services.'*

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	YES	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	19 November 2018
Date for relevant Council meeting	12 December 2018	Date for submission to Government Dept.	N/A

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The current 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.

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, or linked to, the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 A four week public consultation on the strategy was carried out in March 2018, following Cabinet approval in January 2018. A range of local organisations were invited to comment during this consultation period. These included:

- The Wildlife Trust
- Natural England
- Nene Park Trust
- Froglife
- Buglife

5.2 A total of 2 consultation responses were received. These comments and observations have been incorporated, where appropriate, within the revised Strategy presented. A summary of the consultation comments is included within Appendix A.

5.3 The objectives and actions set out in the draft strategy were widely supported by the Wildlife Trust, however a few minor revisions were recommended including the wording regarding biodiversity in planning to ensure the actions reflected the recently updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to delivering biodiversity net gain.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 It is anticipated that Cabinet will recommend the adoption of the PCC Biodiversity Strategy to Full Council. The adoption of the revised Biodiversity Strategy will ensure the Council is meeting its legal requirements of having due regard to biodiversity whilst following a refreshed strategy which provides an updated framework from the current version adopted in 2010.

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 by Full Council.

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 Adoption of the Strategy does not introduce any additional financial costs and does not require any additional investment. 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.

For information, delivery of the actions in the current adopted Biodiversity Strategy has been estimated to cost approximately £20k per year but has also brought in approximately £16k of income to the Council. It should also be noted that during the past five years, the delivery of the Strategy has secured approximately £185k of additional grants and funds.

Legal Implications

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

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 There are no anticipated equalities implications arising from this decisions.

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 - PCC Biodiversity Strategy - Consultation Comments
Appendix 2 - PCC Biodiversity Strategy - Final Version for Adoption

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