

Economic Development, Transport and climate emergency Scrutiny Commission

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10 Year Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031

1 Purpose of Briefing

1.1 The purpose of this briefing is to present the draft 10 year Biodiversity Action Plan and set out the key issues in supporting the long-term aspirations for biodiversity in the city.

2. Background

2.1 The UK government published its first UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) in 1994, (updated in 2007). This put forward plans for conservation of the UK's biological resources and to meet these targets, a network of regional and local BAP plans were published.

In 2011, the UK BAP was replaced by 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services', which formed part of the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. This set out new country-level strategies for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales up to 2020.

Defra has recently published A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (Defra 2018), which details plans to improve air and water quality and protect threatened wildlife.

2.2 The regional Strategic Plan was drawn up in 2009 by the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) and provided a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2026. It contained regional policies for protecting and enhancing the natural environment and promoting green infrastructure. The EMDA with all policies was abolished in 2012 and replaced by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP).

2.3 Innovative work carried out in the 1980s resulted in Leicester's first ecology plan 'Leicester Ecology Strategy Part One' in 1989. Evidence was gathered from a habitat audit undertaken by the City Wildlife Project and helped Leicester to become the first Environment City for its ground-breaking work in this area.

2.4 In 2006, Leicester City Council and Environ produced the first Leicester BAP 'Wild About Leicester – Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan' 2006-2009, which identified habitats present and specific to Leicester. These included pre-industrial rural landscapes, built structures and managed open spaces such as parks, allotments and private gardens.

This BAP complimented the LLR BAP and considered the importance of these habitats in a local context and how they related to people interacting with them. In 2011 Leicester produced the second BAP 'Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2011 – 2021', which identified a number of specific objectives.

3. 10 Year Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2030

3.1 This 10 Year BAP builds on that document and is now divided into two parts, attached at Appendix I below :

Part 1 sets out an over-arching framework for habitat and species conservation in Leicester. It focuses on the legislation and environmental framework that supports biodiversity and the mechanisms in place to help achieve these ambitious aims.

Part 2 sets out a five year programme of Habitat and Species Action Plans (HAPs and SAPs) for habitats and species that are associated with Leicester and the Midlands. It sets actions and targets for the council, stakeholders and other partners to help conserve these habitats and species.

3.2 The vision of the 10-year BAP is :

'To create a city rich in biodiversity, where nature is able to disperse across well-connected, diverse and high-quality habitats capable of supporting characteristic species, and safe-guarding them from further decline, with the support of people fully engaged in helping species and to conserve areas across Leicester.'

3.3 The key aims of the BAP are to :

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats, wherever possible, and increase the biodiversity value of designated and priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve and enhance a range of habitats and associated species that characterise the city; contributing to regional and national biodiversity, whilst providing an attractive and sustainable natural environment in which to live, work, learn and enjoy
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery
- Create nature recovery networks by identifying, creating, and improving green corridors and by creating and enhancing ecological connectivity
- Improve ecological resilience by promoting good design to optimise biodiversity and achieve multiple benefits in projects and planning
- Promote biodiversity conservation as an essential element of sustainable development and adaptation to climate
- Raise awareness of biodiversity and nature conservation and its importance and encourage active participation at all levels

3.4 Key Strategic Goals and Targets

The headline strategic goals to achieve these are to:

- Manage at least 30% of greenspace under Council control for wildlife by 2031
- Increase connectivity of greenspace across the city and beyond by 25% through the establishment of cohesive Nature Recovery Networks by 2031
- Reduce the prevalence and incidence of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) by at least 50% by 2031
- Reduce the overall use of pesticides across Council land by at least 50% by 2031

3.5 Key Themes

A number of key themes have emerged through the plan and include much needed public engagement to raise awareness of issues facing wildlife and to encourage proactive measures to overcome these.

Specific actions and targets to be delivered by the Council aim to safeguard biodiversity as a whole, but especially target rare and vulnerable Priority Habitats and Species.

Key Themes in the BAP are :

- Biodiversity Net Gain – to mitigate biodiversity loss through the planning system and focus biodiversity enhancement at key strategic receptor sites. This will create the new high-quality habitats and improve connections to greenspace to facilitate wildlife corridors, achieve overall biodiversity gain and create a cohesive Nature Recovery Network.
- Ground Maintenance – to manage areas of greenspace effectively through appropriate management and reduce the use of pesticides across all council owned land.
- Public Engagement – to raise awareness of urban biodiversity and its capacity to support a diverse range of species; actively engage and encourage participation and responsibility for positive actions

4. Timescale and next steps

4.1 These documents have been subject to extensive internal and external consultation. An Executive Decision was taken by the Deputy City Mayor, Environment and Transportation, on the 27th July 2021 to adopt the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031 as Informal Guidance.

4.2 The report and decision notice were published on the Council's website and can be accessed on the decision web page. The decision was :

1. To adopt the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031 as Informal Guidance to provide an over-arching framework for habitat and species conservation in Leicester.
2. To share and promote the documents on the council's website and to engage with other parts of the council, elected members, partners and stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan priorities and achievement of the BAP targets in species and habitat conservation.
3. To publish a summary document for Members and the wider public on the importance of Biodiversity and the priorities and targets in the Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031.



Biodiversity Action
Plan Part 1 240321.p



Biodiversity Action
Plan Part 2 240321.p