Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Meeting Rooms G.01 and G.02, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Members of the Commission

Councillor Joel (Chair)
Councillor Singh Sandhu (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Fonseca, Malik, Porter, Rae Bhatia, Singh Johal and Valand

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:
Sazeda Yasmin (Scrutiny Policy Officer)
Aqil Sarang (Democratic Support Officer),
Tel: 0116 4545591, e-mail: aqil.sarang@leicester.gov.uk
Leicester City Council, City Hall, 3rd Floor Granby Wing, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
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Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:
Aqil Sarang, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 4545591.
Alternatively, email , or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 18 August 2021 and 7 September 2021 will be circulated and Members are asked to confirm them as correct record.

4. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on any questions, representations and statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

The following question has been received from Margaret Lewis:

"To ensure a modal shift away from cars to more sustainable transport, it is imperative that car drivers are given incentives as well as disincentives to switch. May we ask if the WPL will be used to pilot subsidising fares for key groups, such as school children and those on benefits? If not, why not?"

The Following question has been received from Zina Zelter:

"Do you propose to ensure that a parking space charge is higher than an annual bus ticket? And if bus prices continue to rise, will you put in a mechanism to ensure that the WPL charge rises with them?"

5. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

Appendix A (Pages 1 - 8)

The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submits a report updating the Commission on the Economic Recovery Plan.

Members of the Commission are recommended to pass any comments to the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment.

7. LEICESTER BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2021-2031

Appendix B (Pages 9 - 94)

The Director for Planning Development and Transportation submits a report on the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031

Members of the Commission are recommended to pass comments to the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation.

8. TRANSFORMING CITIES - GREAT CENTRAL WAY

Appendix C (Pages 95 - 120)

The Director of Planning Development and Transportation submits a presentation on the Transforming Cities – Great Central way project.

Members of the Commission are recommended to pass any comments to the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation.

9. CONNECTING LEICESTER - ST GEORGE ST/GRANBY ST

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submits a presentation on the Connecting Leicester – St George Street/Granby Street project.

Members of the Commission are recommended to pass any comments to the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix D (Pages 121 - 128)

For Members' consideration, the work programme for the Commission is attached.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appendix A

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Commission

Date of Commission Meeting: 13 October 2021

Economic Recovery Plan Update

Report of the Director of Tourism, Culture and Investment

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report authors: Mike Dalzell/ Peter Chandler

■ Author contact details: 0116 454 4551 mike.dalzell@leicester.gov.uk/ 0116 454 6415 peter.chandler@leicester.gov.uk

Suggested content

1. Purpose of report

1.1 This report is a further update noting progress against the economic recovery plan that was launched in October 2020. This follows on from updates provided to this commission in March, June and August 2021. This report concentrates on key actions the council is taking to promote economic recovery.

1.2 The report outlines how the Scrutiny Review 'Economic Development at the Local Level' published in July 2020 has informed the development of the plan and resulting activities.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To note the contents and comment on this report.

3. Report

Background

3.1 The published recovery plan has helped to guide short term responses to the economic impacts of the pandemic. Work is also now under way to generate longer term plans for the city centre and the wider city economy. This report builds on the update provided to the scrutiny commission in March, June and August 2021.

Scrutiny Review 'Economic Development at the Local Level'

3.2 The Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission published a review in July 2020 into 'Economic Development at the Local Level'. The report was specifically focused on the manifesto commitment to 'develop job creation, skills and investment plans for parts of Leicester which are economically excluded, including opportunities for local businesses and for young people to engage in positive activities', and how these aims might be achieved at a local neighbourhood level.

3.3 The five key recommendations of the report were as follows:

1. To make greater use of statistical data when developing policies and services.
2. To intervene at a local level, using engagement with residents and community organisations as a starting point for policy development.
3. To intervene at a Council level, noting that although there are strong Council policies on social value and procurement there is a risk that these policies may still leave some geographical areas behind. Specific activities to be considered include:
   (a) hold job fairs within those neighbourhoods where economic activity is low and promote employment opportunities to local residents.
   (b) have a specific focus on young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who are entering the labour market or been part of the 'gig' economy, who have been particularly negatively impacted by the pandemic.
4. To address 'poverty' issues first if people are to engage with the challenges of securing employment, and specifically advocates for individual support and personalised mentoring.
5. To focus on Inclusive growth - economic growth that is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunity for all.
   (a) Persuade local employers to sign up to voluntary employment charters
   (b) Reflect inclusive growth in plans to revive the economy post Covid-19, and lobby the government for additional resources
   (c) To use the New Local Government Network framework for local inclusive growth to inform the design and delivery of local economic development within the city.

Recovery Plan Delivery

3.4 The ideas and recommendations in the report have been considered in the development of the economic recovery plan. Clearly much of the work of the Scrutiny review was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent major economic shock that has resulted. This economic shock has further exacerbated existing inequalities, and even though the economic context has materially altered, many of the recommendations in the review still hold. Some specific activities that build on the recommendations are as follows:

Use of data

3.5 As previously reported, a basket of data indicators has been developed to track Leicester's economic recovery and performance. This work is being developed by the Smart Cities team using the Open Data Platform, and involves sourcing, collating, analysing and uploading data from a range of Council services and external organisations onto the platform, where it can be presented and visualised. The benefit of using the Open Data platform is that economic data for Leicester can be combined with other data sets, for example public health data, to inform decision making. A range of economic indicators have already been uploaded onto the platform, including unemployment, Universal credit data and NEET data, and work to build the range of datasets on the platform continues.

3.6 The economic regeneration service has begun a comprehensive review of its services to determine how engagement is or isn't effective with the various communities that make up the city. This will cover both individual employment

support activities and business support interventions. This initiative is also linked to and part of the corporate equalities work programme.

Interventions

3.7 A major impact of the pandemic has been on unemployment, and particularly youth unemployment. It should also be noted that the impact of the pandemic has yet to play out in full. Particular sectors of the economy have clearly been hit particularly hard, and Covid-19 has had a significant impact on certain industries, for example hospitality, retail, the performing arts and some other creative industries. These sectors that have been impacted also employ large numbers of young people, and as in other towns and cities this has driven a significant increase in youth unemployment in Leicester. It is also worth noting that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) only ended in September 2021, delaying the full impact of COVID on the labour market and youth unemployment.

3.8 Several existing and new labour market interventions to address unemployment, and specifically youth unemployment, are being developed and/or are being delivered, as follows:

3.9 Kickstart Programme: The City Council committed to creating 30 kickstart placements as part of the economic recovery plan. Leicester City Council has also been approved as a Kickstart Gateway organisation by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This supports six-month work placements for young people aged 18-24 years that are in receipt of Universal Credit, paid at the national minimum wage. In many respects this scheme is similar to the previously successful Future Jobs Fund. The initial Kickstart application creates 87 job opportunities across local SMEs, Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. There is potential to grow this number once more roles have been identified and approved in local SMEs and the local authority, and indeed a further 25 roles in the City Council have recently been identified. All young people will be offered training support via the Adult Education service whilst employed.

3.10 Kickstart extensions: The city council in partnership with the LLEP and the County Council also initiated a scheme that will provide £500k from LLEP resources to local businesses to enable them to employ young people for an extra 6 months on top of the standard 6 months being supported by government. That scheme is being administered by the City Council's economic regeneration team and has just been launched. This has been specifically designed to support disadvantaged individuals such as those with disabilities and ex-offenders.

3.11 Employment Hub: Leicester City Council has secured a further £2.0m from the European Social Fund (ESF) to continue the delivery of the Employment Hub until December 2023. This project provides a co-ordinated offer for businesses and individuals who are seeking apprenticeship, traineeship, and work placement opportunities. It will link businesses with individuals we are supporting through the National Careers Service, Job Centre Plus, Connexions and the Princes Trust, particularly those hardest to reach. The extended project aims to support a further 300 SMEs and create a further 225 new jobs (in

addition to the initial targets in the first phase to support 220 SMEs and 165 jobs created) across the city and county. This sub regional approach is a requirement of the ESF funding. Throughout the pandemic, the Employment Hub has been delivering a programme of 'virtual' recruitment 'Hub 100' recruitment fairs that have proved popular and neighbourhood based events will be tested.

3.12 Youth Employment Hub: Leicester City Council has also recently launched this new centre in the old Visit Leicester tourist information site on Granby Street though the building itself has some drawbacks and other options are being considered for a more permanent base. The Council has been successful in attracting a further £2m of ESF funding to establish this city centre hub to support young people into employment, together with funding from DWP. The centre provides support to young people in Leicester looking to move into employment by providing a joined up service with DWP and other providers such as the Employment Hub, LASALS, Connexions, The Princes Trust, Futures, DMU and other relevant agencies, and links in with several community hubs in libraries and community venues across the city. To date 100 young people have been supported.

3.13 Ex-Offender Project: Working with the Police & Crime Commissioner's office and DWP, the City Council has secured £35k from the DWP Flexible Support Fund to recruit a project coordinator to work with employers to create employment opportunities for ex-offenders. This project is also embedded within the Employment Hub and Youth Employment Hub. Noting the recommendation in the scrutiny review, a key element of the project is the launch of an employment charter with local businesses.

3.14 Onsite Construction Hub: With part funding of £518k from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) this project will support over 400 individuals to move into the construction industry by providing dedicated training and practical onsite construction experience. This project will establish pathways for young people looking to work in the construction industry.

3.15 LASALS Redundancy Support Package: providing careers advice and planning; online job search, application and interview skills; employability skills including courses to retrain and digital skills for work.

3.16 Graduate Retention: Partnership with De Montfort University and University of Leicester, with joint project manager. Includes Leicester Graduate City project (with £840k ESF grant) supporting graduates with internship opportunities with local businesses.

3.17 City Council as an Employer – A key element of the recovery plan was for the council itself to prioritise and support 70 extra entry to employment opportunities within the council workforce over the next two years (30 kickstart placements, 30 apprenticeships, 10 graduates). That work has been led by the Organisational Development Team and championed by senior managers including the Chief Operating Officer, and has included the appointment of a dedicated officer to drive that work. The council is on track to deliver the targets.

3.18 The council is consulting extensively with community organisations and residents over plans to regenerate the heart of Stocking Farm and in many parts of the city is carrying out neighbourhood retail area improvements.

Strategy and resources for Inclusive Growth

(b) Reflect inclusive growth in plans to revive the economy post Covid-19, and lobby the government for additional resources
(c) To use the New Local Government Network framework for local inclusive growth to inform the design and delivery of local economic development within the city.

3.19 Inclusive growth principles have been reflected in other recent strategies for Economic Growth and recovery. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership recently adopted an economic growth strategy for 2021-2030 that highlighted inclusive growth as one of four pillars to guide action. A relevant extract is included below…

INCLUSIVE *Create a resilient, adaptive workforce where all residents have access to skills and career progression and are paid the living wage*	*OPPORTUNITIES:* ▪ *Diversity and international links of population and communities* ▪ *Progress in youth, employment and careers services* *CHALLENGES:* ▲ *Concentrations of deprivation* ▲ *Low education and skills attainment* ▲ *Social, economic and health inequalities*	*1. Informed choices and routes to job and skills progression* *2. Improve skills and qualifications attainment and employability of the workforce* *3. Improve access to work, labour market inclusion and wellbeing at work* *4. Improve jobs quality, in-work progression and pay*

3.20 Work is continuing on a new city centre economic plan and a wider growth strategy for the city. Inclusive growth principles will also be engrained into these documents as they are developed.

3.21 Clearly the ability to deliver economic recovery also rests on the availability of resources. There is considerable uncertainty around longer term funding to support economic development. Government announcements on available resources to support the economic recovery are expected in the Autumn statement at the end of October 2021.

3.21 Community Renewal Fund: As previously reported, Leicester was identified as one of 100 priority areas for the £220m Community Renewal Fund (CRF). This aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches to prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The CRF is proposed to invest in skills, local business, communities and place, and supporting people into employment.

3.22 Leicester City Council was invited to submit CRF bids to government on behalf of the city with a combined value of up to £3m, although there is no guarantee of any funding. Bids are encouraged by government to be at least £500k in value and since all monies need to be spent by March 2022 and as 90% of the funds are revenue, this is extremely challenging.

3.23 The council promoted the opportunity widely throughout the city. A total of 29 proposals were received requesting support of circa £18.5m. Following a rigorous appraisal process five projects were shortlisted and have been included in Leicester's CRF submission to government on 18 June. Government will then decide whether to the fund all, some or none of the projects. Although funding decisions had been promised from the end of July, at the time of writing the outcome of this has not yet been announced.

3.24 Several of the submitted bids were led by, or included, local community organisation partners. Should CRF funding be awarded, this will provide resources to deliver some of the additional targeted individual support recommended by the Scrutiny review.

5. Financial, legal, and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

Not applicable

5.2 Legal implications

Not applicable

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

Not applicable

5.4 Equalities Implications

Not applicable

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Not applicable

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

None

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a "key decision"?

No

10. If a key decision please explain reason

N/A

Appendix B

Planning, Development and Transportation

Leicester City Council

Economic Development, Transport and climate emergency Scrutiny Commission

Date: **13th October 2021**

From: **Annie Provan/Helen O'Brien/Ben Devine**

Ext: **(37) 2963**

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

Leicester's
Biodiversity
Action Plan

Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2030

Part One

Targets to help create a beautiful and bio-diverse city

Leicester City Council

Contents

Foreword

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

Foreword

Cllr Clarke

CM

Foreword

The loss of biodiversity at a global scale is significant and in need of action to help stop decline. Global impacts of climate change and the ever-present threat of reaching a point of no-return with record temperatures broken annually, severe droughts and prolonged periods of flooding are all taking their toll on our species of flora and fauna. Our ability to do something about this locally and to act now in this state of emergency has significantly increased with the predictions of climate change.

Alongside this, the unprecedented and still unknown impacts of Covid-19 are expected to impact on biodiversity at both a global and local scale. During the initial phases of lockdown in the UK, it was surprising how quickly our wildlife "recovered". In Leicester, the air quality improved and our Parks and Open Spaces looked "greener"; water quality improved so we could see the bottom of the canal or river allowing our plants and animals access to light and breathe again by increasing oxygen levels through natural processes of photosynthesis. People were forced to visit their local patch – the park down the road - to simply listen and enjoy birdsong, watch butterflies and bees flit from flower to flower and re-discover the simple pleasures of getting close to nature.

Whilst Leicester is a bio-diverse city located ecologically in the middle of the country and well-placed for ecological restoration, it is also mindful of the continuing decline of many habitats and species of conservation (and human) importance. Demands for species to exist (and provide benefits to humans) within the city are high and the required ecological enhancements to ensure their continuation (and the continuation of the benefits given to humans) requires space for breeding, nesting, feeding and growing.

Since the first Leicester BAP (2006-2009) was published there have been significant changes in legislation, guidance and mechanisms at a national and local level to support biodiversity and to help halt its loss. The government published **A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment** in 2018 and set out a framework by which to support our biodiversity. It is set in context with anticipated changes resulting from climate change together with local demands from an increasing population and the infrastructure to support. Leaving adequate space for our wildlife to thrive is well-recognised amongst the environmentalists, but we need to do more to raise awareness and create additional habitats or improve others for our species. Relic habitats from a former agricultural and industrial past provide important havens and include species-rich meadows such as Braunstone and Kirby Frith; ancient woodland at Knighton Spinney and Meynell's Gorse together with floodplain meadows at Aylestone and Birstall fed by the River Soar.

The principles of the Lawton review (2010) are as relevant today as they were when first identified and the mantra of "More, Bigger, Better, Connected" now lies at the heart of our new Biodiversity Action Plan. These relic sites are fragile and in danger of being isolated so ensuring we have more sites that are better connected will be achieved by identifying areas to improve biodiversity and provide corridors and dispersal routes for wildlife across the city.

Identifying suitable "Biodiversity Opportunity Sites" to prioritise habitat creation, restoration or enhancement to conserve species and establish a robust Nature Recovery Network that links from the city to the wider countryside is a major aim of this Plan. Work is on-going along the River Soar corridor to create more wetlands at Aylestone, Belgrave and Watermead that connect marsh, floodplain and wetland to the rivers and brooks. Road-verge meadows and re-wilding our parks to support pollinators, works along our smaller brooks to re-naturalise and an extensive programme to look after our existing tree stock and plant more trees in the best places to ensure their survival in the future will all contribute towards a resilient Nature Recovery Network to help secure wildlife conservation in Leicester.

Getting people involved in as many different ways possible and letting people know what they can do, when and why is an important way of getting support and will be run alongside a programme to tell people where the best places for wildlife are and what they can see on their visits. Wildlife really is on the doorstep for many people living in Leicester and should be part of their daily lives.

This Biodiversity Action Plan needs to be fit for purpose and the challenges that lay ahead. To help with this, the Plan has been divided into two parts. Part 1 focuses on the legislation and environmental framework that supports biodiversity from international to local level and the mechanisms in place at a central and local government level to help achieve these ambitious aims. Part 2 describes the actions for certain habitats and species that are associated with Leicester and the Midlands. It sets actions and targets for the council, stakeholders and their partners together with community groups and individuals to help conserve these habitats and their associated species. Above all, this is not just about what the local authority can do, but more about how they can help facilitate and achieve the vision and aims set out in the Plan.

Working together, the Plan will take forward and adapt to the very real challenges set by climate change and Covid-19. It will implement the Plan over the next 10 years and will continue to review and revise Action Plans and update them depending on changing circumstances, legislation/regulation or other changes which occur during that period. It should not be seen as a stand-alone document but is very much part of a suite of Environmental documents produced by the council and partners. The Plan contains realistic and achievable targets to create new environments, safeguard others and get people involved to help our wildlife to thrive and for Leicester to be a Beautiful and Bio-diverse city.

Chapter 1.0 Introduction

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

1.0 Introduction

The Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides an over-arching framework for habitat and species conservation in Leicester. It recognises the opportunities for biodiversity to be integral to sustainable living and central to achieving net gains in biodiversity across the city.

It recognises the benefits bio-diverse green space can bring to people and will identify better ways to promote and engage people in wildlife conservation.

To achieve this, the council will work with service areas within the council, politicians, external partners and the local community to ensure a co-ordinated approach to fulfilling its aims and objectives.

1.1 THE VISION

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 conserve areas across Leicester.

1.2 LEICESTER BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN AIMS

To conserve and enhance a range of habitats and associated species that characterise the city of Leicester, contributing to the regional and national biodiversity whilst providing an attractive and sustainable natural environment in which to live, work, learn and enjoy.

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- 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

1.3 LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS:

The council will work in partnership with others wherever possible to achieve the following:

- Oversee the production and implementation of the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan
- Strengthen and improve the duty of the local authority to make sure it carries out its function to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Identify and map the current green network of priority sites and identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement that will contribute to an overall Nature Recovery Network
- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Seek out ways to commit landowners to a binding agreement to secure the long-term sustainability where wildlife-rich sites have been created or restored
- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level
- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all

Chapter 2.0 Background to Leicester's Biodiversity

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

2.0 Background to Leicester's Biodiversity

2.1 DEFINITION OF BIODVERSITY

Biodiversity (a contraction of 'biological diversity') refers to the number, variety and variability of living organisms. It is often defined in terms of genes, species and ecosystems. Biodiversity is widely considered to be a measure of ecosystem quality or health: greater biodiversity indicates better health.

2.2 HISTORY OF BIODIVERSITY ACTION

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) emerged as a consequence of over 150 countries signing up to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to address significant declines in wildlife at a global scale. These countries were required to develop national strategies for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of biological resources.

Work on a global scale has continued with conventions on Biological Diversity held every ten years. The last convention was held in Japan and resulted in the revision and adoption of the updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and included the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for the period 2011-2020.

A set of 20 Aichi targets contained within five strategic goals were set out to be achieved by 2020

- Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society;
- Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use
- Strategic Goal C: Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity;
- Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

Progress on actions and outcomes achieved by the UK are available at **https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/targets/** and although clearly much work has been done to implement processes, raise awareness and encourage participation, there is still more to be done to put measures in place that will fully ensure biodiversity is maintained and enhanced or that further degradation is halted. Delivery of resilient and coherent ecological networks, healthy and well-functioning ecosystems which deliver multiple benefits for wildlife and people is a clear message. However, targets set at 90% of priority habitats in favourable or recovering condition and at least 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition and recovering by 2020 have not been achieved.

Similarly, more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the extent of these habitats as well as fully functioning and resilient ecological networks by 2020 emphasises that biodiversity action so far in the last 25 years has not been sufficient to stem the tide of loss. More action is required and a commitment by participating members to agree actions post-2020 was called for in 2017.

2.2.1 NATIONAL – THE UK'S BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME

The UK government published its first UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) in 1994, last updated in 2007. The BAP puts forward plans for conservation of the UK's biological resources and to meet these targets, a network of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) at a regional and county level were published. In 1999 45 UK Habitat and 391 Species Action Plans were drawn up.

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. The Biodiversity 2020 aim was to:

"*halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.*"

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. The aim is to achieve clean air, water, thriving plants and wildlife, reducing risk of harm from environmental hazards, using resources more sustainably and enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

A number of goals have been recommended to take forward a programme of work - the most relevant to biodiversity are:

Thriving plants and wildlife

- Restore 750 000 ha of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long-term;
- Create or restore 500 000 ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside of the protected site network – focus on priority habitats to provide extensive benefits;
- Be pro-active in species recovery of threatened animals, plants and fungi
  Increase woodland cover in England (by 12% cover by 2060 = 180 000 ha of planting by 2042)

Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently

- Strengthen existing requirements for net gain for biodiversity in National Planning Policy and expand to include wider natural capital benefits e.g. flood protection, improved water and air quality;
- Introduce tools and guidance that support biodiversity net gain approaches
- Produce stronger new standards for Green Infrastructure
- Support community forests in urban tree planting schemes to bring trees and GI to towns and cities, providing Woodland grants and appointing a Tree Champion
- Increasing the number of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage) and amending Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to clarify construction and on-going maintenance for SUDS in new developments, tightening links with planning guidance for water quality and biodiversity

Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

- Creating a Nature Recovery Network of up to 25 new catchment or landscape-scale Nature Recovery Areas of up to 500 000 ha for wildlife habitat to include wildflower-rich meadows, woodland and peatland
- The Nature Recovery Network will provide better access for people alongside improved habitat for pollinating insects

The key policies to achieve these goals are:

- Using and managing land sustainably
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing

2.2.2 REGIONAL – EAST MIDLANDS STRATEGIC PLAN

This 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).

2.2.3 LOCAL – LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BAP

A Biodiversity Working Group drew up the first Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland BAP (LLR BAP) in 1998 *'Biodiversity Challenge: an Action Plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland'.* The Plan identified 17 Habitat Action Plans and 14 Species Action Plans.

In the 2005 update the numerous targets and actions detailed in the original plan were greatly reduced due to their complexity and accuracy in reporting. Urban Habitats (Leicester) was also added to the County BAP, but this contained details at a very generic level.

In 2010 the LLR BAP had a major revision to include the creation of new habitats in the wider countryside which had largely been over-looked previously. The BAP recommended actions and opportunities to enhance these areas and consider how they could be connected to a wider network of sites of higher value and so help with conservation and dispersal of species at a landscape scale.

In 2016 the LLR BAP was again updated to cover the period 2016 – 2026. All 19 Priority Habitats were revised, together with an assessment of the current state and trends. Species Action Plans were also updated with the addition of a Swifts, Swallows and House Martins plan. Urban habitat was also retained in the Plan in its wider context to include major towns and conurbations outside of Leicester such as Loughborough, Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough.

2.2.4 CITY – THE LEICESTER CITY BAP

Innovative work carried out in the 1980s produced 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.

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 separated into:

Participation Objectives – to encourage involvement in and awareness of wildlife issues and habitat recording;
Strategic Objectives – to improve dispersal and mitigate against climate change and other environmental impacts through development of an effective biodiversity network;
Habitat Objectives – to improve the condition of habitat types and increase their biodiversity value

2.2.5 LEICESTER'S BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2021 – 2031

Leicester's previous BAP was written to cover a 10-year period 2011 – 2021, but since then there have been significant changes in legislation, government strategies and plans as well as national and local planning policies relating to biodiversity.

This plan takes into account those changes, but continues to build on the approach of the last BAP in response to the changing priorities on a UK and Leicester scale.

The plan is divided into two sections:

Part 1: Sets out the past and present context of Biodiversity planning nationally and locally in the objectives and actions within planning and policy, public participation and monitoring and review of biodiversity in Leicester.

Part 2: Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans specific to Leicester containing a programme of actions to be delivered by the council and BAP partners to achieve the aims and objectives of the overall Plan

With reference to the international commitment to halt biodiversity loss and establish resilient and coherent ecological networks set out in the Aichi targets and anticipated post-2020 actions, it is perhaps even more significant that local BAPs are still part of an international and national framework to deliver positive changes and raise awareness at a local level.

2.3 LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Leicester has a number of Strategies and Plans that cross-reference Biodiversity within their agendas and programmes of work. These are regularly reviewed alongside a programme of actions to deliver their aims and objectives. These plans and other strategies are available on the Council website at **https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/environment-and-sustainability/**

The most relevant are below and listed in Section 8 References.

2.3.1 LOCAL – LEICESTER'S SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2019

Leicester's Sustainability Action Plan (LSAP) captured sustainability across the whole council. It drew on a number of documents from specific services that manage a programme of sustainability in Leicester. The Action Plan has been replaced by Leicester's Climate Change Strategy (see below) following the raised awareness for actions to reduce impacts predicted through climate change.

Leicester's BAP was a key document in the Sustainability Action Plan and the Plan cross-referenced several targets from the BAP and will continue to be fully aligned with the new Climate Emergency Strategy. This over-arching document will seek ways to enable biodiversity conservation to be more easily and consistently integrated into other strategic plans and projects through its developing aims, objectives and proposed actions.

2.3.2 LOCAL - LEICESTER CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY 2020 - 2023

Climate change in the UK is predicted to lead to drier and warmer summers and milder and wetter winters interspersed with extreme weather events such as flooding and drought. Climate change is therefore likely to alter the natural environment with some species more at risk of local extinction through habitat loss and fragmentation caused by extremes of weather conditions. Long hot summers or increased flooding degrading water quality and damaging our ecosystems is likely to lead to changes in life cycles of many wildlife species as well as disrupting growing conditions for plants and trees that provide a valuable habitat and food source.

Species shift their populations northwards to cooler areas whereas others migrate southwards to take advantage of the warmer conditions. Species that hibernate and rely on food source availability are more vulnerable when they awake during periods of unseasonal warm weather during the winter or may die during prolonged cold spells. These behavioural changes to our wildlife caused by changing weather patterns could disrupt the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

Opportunities for mitigation against the impacts of climate change in Leicester are central to the delivery of the outcomes of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and associated biodiversity outputs in the BAP. Using natural climate solutions to work with nature to achieve a multitude of environmental and social benefits will be prioritised.

Adaptation measures that support the national UK Biodiversity Framework and Defra Environmental Plan are directed to conservation of our wildlife as well as mitigation against climate change. Actions to address climate change adaptation have been included in the LSAP from 2011 and will continue to be addressed through the new Climate strategy and action plan. The BAP will be closely aligned with the Climate Emergency Strategy to support actions to reduce predicated changes and help conserve our wildlife and fragile habitats in Leicester. The BAP will also remain the key document for addressing adaptatin measures relating to biodversity.

Examples of how this can be done are:

- A strategic landscape-scale approach to habitat creation or restoration to reduce fragmentation and promote permeability across the landscape using natural flood management ;
- Provide dispersal routes for wildlife within and through sites to link to adjacent areas to create functioning Nature Recovery Network
- Plant native tree varieties and plants that will tolerate changing climate e.g. both droughts or flooding, extremes of hot or cold temperatures
- Changes in habitat management to adjust to changing climatic conditions e.g. hay-cutting season;
- Promote innovation in central urban areas where space is limited with habitats of green walls or roofs and wildlife structures integral to the built environment (see Buildings and Built Structures)

2.3.3 LOCAL – LEICESTER'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY 2015-2025

This strategy provides an objective assessment of Leicester's current assets and uses a series of maps to illustrate where to prioritise projects to deliver the maximum number of benefits and ecosystem services for the city. It encompasses some of the key aims and objectives of other service areas by recognising the value of green space and green networks in helping to achieve these benefits.

The over-arching aims of the strategy are separated into five priorities

1. A Place to Do Business and Get About – linked to economic growth, regeneration and built design together with sustainable transport and car travel
2. A Bio-diverse and Beautiful City – linked to provision of habitats, access to nature, attractive and well-maintained areas of green space
3. A Healthy and Active City – linked to green transport routes and formal/informal recreation to address health and quality of life issues
4. A Naturally Sustainable City – linked to flood storage, controlling impacts of climate change, improving soil, water and air quality
5. Planning for Green Infrastructure – embedding the strategy within local policy and developing a strategic green network of space capable of providing multiple benefits in a cost effective and sustainable way

2.3.4 LOCAL – LEICESTER'S POLLINATOR STRATEGY 2020 - 2025

The Strategy is a legacy of the successful Urban Buzz Project (2017 – 19) between the council and Buglife which resulted in over 100 sites across 35 ha of open space being created or enhanced to benefit pollinators.

This Strategy aims to create a sustainable green network of flowering plants and habitats that will support pollinators through the provision of abundant food sources and nesting habitat.

Leicester's Pollinator Strategy sets out to help pollinators by endorsing a long-term commitment to raise awareness and highlight the serious decline in our native species'. It recognises the important role local authorities have in using their regulatory powers and other functions to deliver, promote and encourage others to participate in work that will benefit pollinators.

The Plan sets out how the council can influence how its land can be both developed and managed across the city through the local planning process and as managers of public open space (POS) and design of green infrastructure to improve networks and connectivity.

This Strategy links closely with the Biodiversity Action Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy under the umbrella of the Climate Emergency Strategy to allow a co-ordinated approach to help conserve this valuable species group.

2.3.5 LOCAL - LEICESTER'S TREE STRATEGY 2018-2023

The city council manage 150 000 trees across the city in various locations such as Parks and open spaces, along highways, within housing estates and school grounds and other areas such as council-owned churchyards and cemeteries and allotments. This totals 107 ha of woodland within these locations. In addition, the council's team provides advice on trees and/or woodland which may be affected through planning and development, particularly on private land within Conservation Areas or where the trees have been designated with a tree preservation order (TPO).
Three strategic aims of the Strategy are to increase the canopy cover and tree numbers within council control; effectively manage the trees in a consistent and economic way which will help to avoid conflict wherever possible and to encourage and advise other landowners to plant and manage their trees effectively.

Specific reference within this Strategy is made to the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Biodiversity Action Plan. Whilst the emphasis on the Strategy is more closely linked to effective management of trees, there is also recognition that trees reduce flood risk whilst providing valuable assets as habitats in their own right as roosts, nesting and food sources for a range of species groups. They provide valuable ecosystems at a macro and micro-level within woodlands and mature/veteran trees so effective management is key to their longevity and maintenance of their ecological structures.

Impacts from predicted changes to our climate are likely to have an impact on some of our native tree species and the species of flora and fauna they support. Ensuring that the councils plans and strategies take a consistent approach that will support a range of agendas is paramount. The right trees in the right place and how new species or sub-species can be planted to tolerate extreme droughts or flooding will also help conserve the biodiversity of Leicester.

2.3.6 LOCAL – LEICESTER'S SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Increasing the capacity for sites to store water on a temporary or permanent basis is fundamental to lowering the risk of flooding across Leicester. Using the principles of natural flood management by incorporating soft engineering techniques such as swales, ponds, green roofs/walls and rain gardens has enabled new wetland habitats to be created across the city. These stepping stones are vital to many species that rely on the water environment for all or part of their life-cycle. Fed largely from run-off from hard surfaces, they are particularly valuable as water sources during periods of drought and provide attractive green space associated with residential development and amenity space.

A programme of flood management along the River Soar from Aylestone to Birstall has helped to create a series of wetlands, open water, meadows and woodlands that control water flows during and post-storm events. Key sites such as Ellis Meadow, Cardinal's Meadow, Loughborough Road North and Swans' Nest wetland have been created in recent years in partnership with the Environment Agency. Although their primary role is to reduce flood risk, the creation of these habitat types on areas of low biodiversity has now created a haven for wildlife and helped to strengthen the ecological corridor to help dispersal. This supports the aims and objectives of several strategies which include the BAP, GI Strategy, Riverside Strategy and Surface Water related Plans (a suite of documents which include the Leicester Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Riverside Environmental Strategy). The council has worked closely with partners such as the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, Soar & GUC Partnership and River Soar Catchment Partnership to achieve multiple benefits recognised in several award-winning schemes.

Whilst there are always opportunities to do more, these schemes provide a useful example of how partners can work together to create safe, attractive green space, well used by local residents and particularly valuable for wildlife.

Reducing the amount of hard-surfacing in urban areas by working closely with planning and encouraging private households and businesses to not pave over gardens, using permeable materials and creating rainwater gardens and planting beds to absorb surface water runoff provide additional opportunities for biodiversity at a local level.

2.3.7 LOCAL - LEICESTER'S JOINT HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY 2018 - 2023

The beneficial effects of attractive and bio-diverse green space on people's health and happiness has been well recognised for some time. Creating or enhancing areas that are good for people are also likely to be beneficial to wildlife. The design and layout of new development and projects together with after-care establishment and on-going management are fundamental to achieving a successful scheme that will provide sustainable green space to benefit people and wildlife.

Key actions in the Leicester Climate Emergency Strategy linked to moderating the heat island effect through increases in vegetation and urban trees should reduce temperatures through shading, evapotranspiration and disrupting wind speeds that will bring health benefits to urban areas. Opportunities to explore ways of targeting those areas with the highest number of residents with health issues, availability and access to green space and how to balance with the needs of wildlife will be integral to developing well-designed schemes to achieve maximum benefits.

2.3.8 LOCAL – LEICESTER'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2011 - 2026

Well planned and designed road networks, cycle routes and pathways in and out of Leicester along our roads and especially between our parks and nature areas, together with commuter routes to work and school can be planted with trees, wildflower lawns or shrubs and combined with SUDS (rainwater drainage) will provide attractive, cooler routes and encourage use. Greening-up these vehicle and pedestrian corridors will enhance the green network and connectivity for wildlife to disperse whilst improving people's health and wellbeing by encouraging more exercise and better access to attractive green space.

The Transport Strategy already includes such measures and ensuring their inclusion in new schemes is key to achieving multiple-benefits that will help our wildlife in Leicester.

"We will improve the landscape and biodiversity at every opportunity. We will also prevent loss of flora and habitat by adopting as a policy the presumption against building on green amenity areas or the extinguishment of highway rights over them so that full control can be exercised. The areas will be retained for the benefit of flora and fauna and the community overall. We are also able to plant more trees in such amenity areas, as suitable tree locations within the main highway areas are very limited for operational reasons. The provision and the maintenance of trees on the highway contribute to air quality improvements. Habitat severance will be avoided where possible. Where this is not possible the effects will be minimised by providing connecting channels".

2.3.9 LOCAL – LEICESTER'S AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2026

This plan identifies key hot-spots where actions are required to reduce pollution from emissions and help improve air quality. By doing so this will benefit the people who live and work in Leicester but also any associated wildlife.

Consultation towards an end-design that includes simple measures such as seeding with wildflower lawn mixes tolerant of regular cuts on verges; planting the right trees to improve air quality and foraging corridors for wildlife whilst raising awareness of the importance these networks are all possible.

Theme 4: Enhancing Planning & the Environment Action 16: Using Trees and Plants to Reduce Air Pollution recognise these opportunities to use natural processes to help mitigate poor air quality. The plan states:

In urban areas, trees, vegetation and green space can help absorb pollutants and improve air quality by absorbing pollutants, and preventing pollutant concentration. In addition to using green spaces to mitigate the effects of poor air quality, opportunities may exist to adapt our transport behaviours and utilise our cycle networks and other forms of active travel around the city centre. We will work with the local universities to find the best pollution absorbing plants and trial the use of them to combat air pollution from cars. This may include altering planting guidance in our Biodiversity Action Plan to use these plants and also trial the use of 'Green Walls'.

2.3.10 LOCAL STRATEGIES SUMMARY

Whilst it is clear that many of the environmental plans and strategies for the city have some reference to biodiversity, it is sometimes difficult to put these into context with how they can help achieve the strategic aims and objectives and link to the over-arching plans for the city.

As each Plan is updated or reviewed it will provide further opportunity to highlight the content of the BAP and where multiple benefits could be achieved both for Biodiversity and the relevant Plans.

Chapter 3.0 Overview of Biodiversity in Leicester

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

3.0 Overview of Biodiversity in Leicester

Leicester's geology, land use and human history have helped to shape the general character of the landscape and influence the biodiversity found in Leicester today.

As well as Leicester's obvious urban environment the city has retained many natural and historic features and created new habitats of natural green space to help conserve our wildlife.

The range of Biodiversity found at Leicester's statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites, UK, Local and Priority BAP Habitats which support Local and Priority Species (under NERC Act 2006), and green or ecological networks which link corridors or provide stepping stones from one habitat to another is described.

Many of our most important and bio-diverse areas in the city have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) to afford them additional protection and enhancement opportunities.

These areas cover a very small percentage of the overall area of the city but connecting them to other open space though our Green Network is fundamental to assisting our wildlife to disperse and colonise a range of sites across the city and beyond. This network is formed by a number of strategic blue/green corridors made up of water and terrestrial habitats such as the River Soar and Grand Union Canal, the Great Central Way, the Rothley Brook and the Mainline and Ivanhoe Railway lines. These are supported by smaller networks along the routes of our main roads and brooks, but many opportunities exist to enhance connectivity and diversity for our wildlife. Many areas are not designated and may contain common types of plants to support a range of habitats for wildlife. In a local context these are important and contribute to the wider strategic network of sites across Leicester that will make up our Nature Recovery Network (NRN).

3.1 PROTECTED AND DESIGNATED SITES

Statutory authorities, partners, developers and local communities need to be aware of the most important sites of wildlife value so that the planning system and other legal requirements can be complied with. It also provides opportunities for further enhancements to be channelled into those sites through appropriate contributions via planning or funding.

A recognised hierarchy of site designation at an international, national and local level in order of importance gives those sites the highest level of statutory protection.

3.1.1 SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

The highest level of site designation in Leicester is the SSSI. Leicester has only one SSSI at Gypsy Lane Claypit which is designated for its geological importance as a former gypsum quarry, but is also of ecological value containing several locally rare plants.

SSSI's are designated and reviewed by Natural England. They have statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981), as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) which provides for a statutory underpinning for biodiversity conservation in accordance with the European Convention on Biological Diversity.

The CROW Act also requires public authorities, including Local Authorities to take reasonable steps to further the conservation and enhancement of the special features of SSSIs in exercising their function.

3.1.2 LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) can be declared by Local Authorities in areas over which they have jurisdiction under Sections 19 and 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) in consultation and agreement with Natural England.

The main function of the reserves is to provide an opportunity for people to be involved in practical nature conservation work and in caring for the wildlife and their local environment. Raising awareness and understanding the value of these areas for wildlife and encouraging studies in nature conservation is also a key requirement of their designation.

Leicester currently has 8 formally designated LNRs and nine candidate LNRs (cLNR).
The sites are shown bel

Local Nature Reserve	Area (ha)
Aylestone Meadows	73.5
Bennion Pools (cLNR)	6.29
Braunstone Park Meadow (cLNR)	3
Castle Hill County Park (cLNR)	85.39
Ethel Road Verge and Ponds, Evington Park (cLNR)	1.5
Glen Hills LNR (joins to Glen Parva LNR)	0.53
Goss Meadows	2.96
Highway Spinney and Meynell's Gorse (cLNR)	8
Humberstone Park	2.4
Kirby Frith	1.9
Knighton Spinney	2.9
Stokeswood Park (cLNR)	6
The Orchards	6.6
Washbrook Nature Reserve (cLNR)	2.86
Watermead South Phase 1	48.9
Welford Road Cemetery (cLNR)	12.39
Willowbrook (cLNR)	12

3.1.3 LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES AND GEOLOGICAL SITES

Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) (formally known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)) do not have statutory protection, but they are recognised in the planning system and Leicester Local Plan (LLP) as areas of biodiversity value in a local context. In some cases they may meet the criteria for designation as a SSSI and therefore should not be considered any less valuable in a biodiversity context.

Leicester currently has **45** LWSs plus over 150 mature trees that have been formally designated using agreed criteria for each habitat type or species group. These are reviewed on a rolling five-year basis. A list of these sites is in **Appendix 1.** The sites are monitored annually to report on their condition and status for national monitoring purposes and advice on appropriate management to maintain or enhance their value. The main habitat types in Leicester include wetland, rivers and brooks, hedgerows, meadows and woodland that can also support rare and vulnerable species. Their designation is agreed by a conservation panel of local conservation organisations and authorities.

The criteria for designation are set out in ***'Guidelines for the selection of Local Wildlife Sites in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (revised 2011)*** published by Leicestershire County Council. The definition of LWS given in this publication is:

'Local Wildlife Sites are important reservoirs of rare, local and declining native species and are the best examples of typical Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland habitats. LWS may also be areas of ecological interest that provide people with the opportunity to learn about, appreciate and experience habitats and species of the natural world.'

Potential (pLWS) and Candidate LWS (cLWS) are those sites that meet the criteria, but have yet to be formally designated. New cLWS are identified through surveys and evidence gathered that meet criteria based on habitat quality and quantity, diversity and access. Potential LWS are those that are likely to meet the criteria, but further survey work is necessary to confirm.

The number and type of LWSs changes from year to year as some sites are identified and designated whilst others may be lost or no longer meet the criteria. See Section 5.2 regarding avoidance of loss, mitigation and compensation.

3.1.4 LEICESTER'S GREEN/BLUE NETWORK

The green network forms an integral part of Leicester's Green/Blue Infrastructure and comprises both designated and non-designated sites which are strategically located across the city in areas that help to protect adjoining sites by acting as a buffer or physically connect sites by linking habitats along their length. The green sites comprise of the terrestrial habitats around the city such as meadows, hedgerows, woodlands and trees whilst the blue network is made up of our rivers, brooks, canals and other open waters such as lakes and ponds.

Many of these sites are allocated as green space in the LLP, but some may be privately owned vegetated areas such as gardens, allotments, churchyards, hedgerows, roadside verges and landscaped areas around employment and housing land. Many were previously identified and designated as Biodiversity Enhancement Sites (BESs) because of their function of linking LWSs and strengthening wildlife corridors. Their main opportunity in relation to biodiversity was to enhance the ecological network, but it is also recognised that this network can provide many ecosystem services and help to mitigate and ameliorate impacts of climate change. Improving air and water quality, stabilisation of soils and carbon sequestration, reducing flood risk and creating usable areas of local amenity space to help people enjoy the places they live and work in are examples of the wider benefits whilst still recognising opportunities for wildlife.

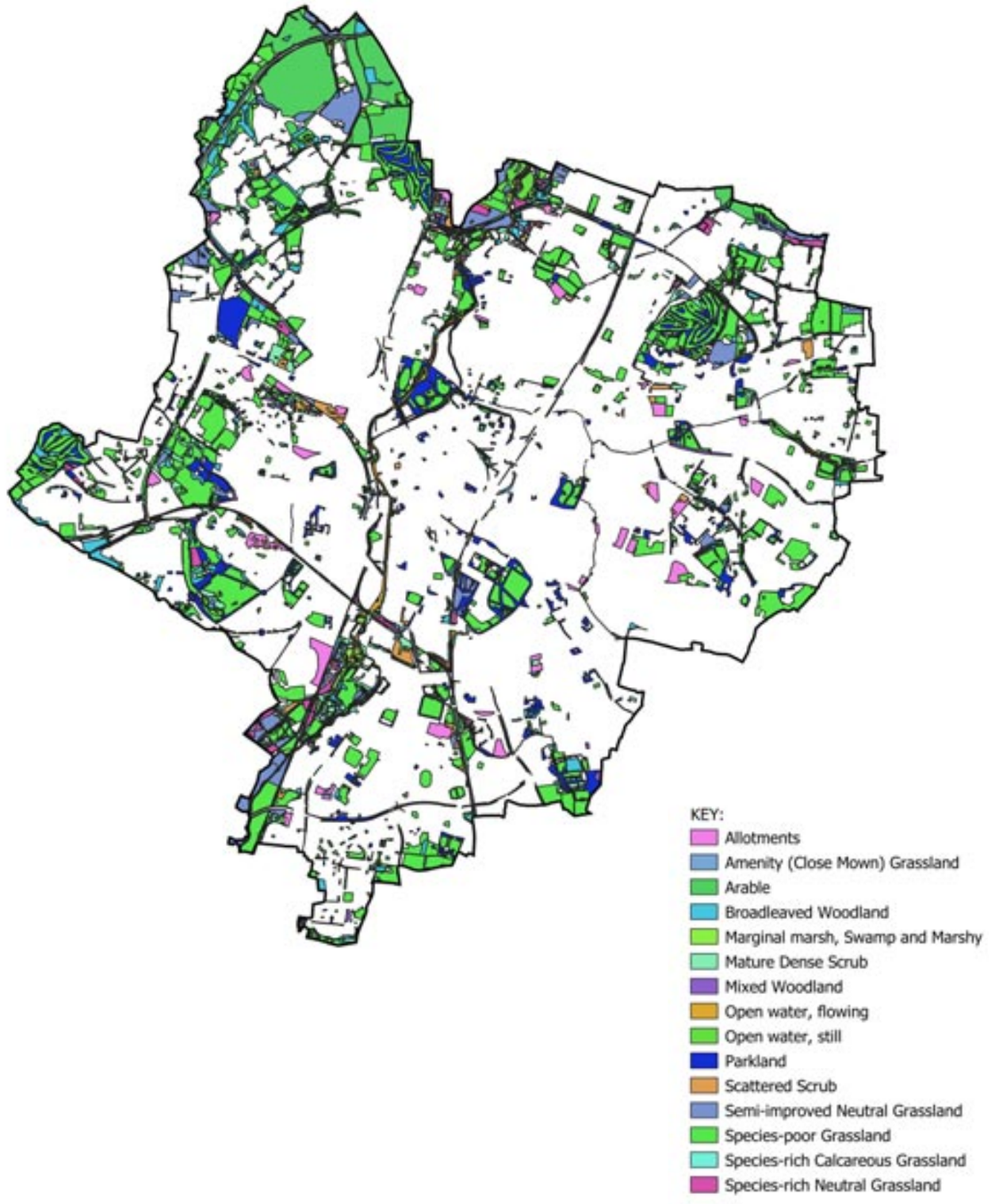
The Open Space Study 2017 and Open Space chapter in the LLP assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of these areas in relation to their primary open space functions. However, secondary functions of Open Space are considered as part of any proposals for BNG and GI policies in the draft Local Plan which should provide further opportunities for net gain both on-site and off-site.

The main green network sites or those closely related areas have been identified through a series of surveys over the last 30 years (see Section 5.4). There are inevitably some gaps in coverage where accessibility is difficult or where post-industrial sites have been left to naturally regenerate and become valuable over time. When a change of use is proposed on such sites, an evaluation of their location in context with the surrounding green network and any nationally or locally designated sites is therefore important, particularly when considering their biodiversity value and opportunities to improve connectivity.

This connectivity is essential to ensure that Leicester's biodiversity is maintained and increased to avoid fragmentation and facilitate species to disperse more freely throughout and reduce the risk of habitat fragmentation and population isolation.

If species cannot disperse, their isolation makes them vulnerable to further pressures of disturbance; it can lead to genetic isolation and loss of diversity within that species or population. In turn this reduces their ability to adapt and more vulnerable to disease, stress and environmental change.

Data derived from Phase 1 Habitat survey 2006-08 and updated assessments from habitat surveys carried out 2018-2020 which identify the main habitat types and areas classified as green space in Leicester.



3.1.5 LEICESTER'S BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITY SITES

Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping (BOM) is a process of desk-based assessment and surveys used to identify areas where there are good opportunities for habitat creation. Such mapping completed at a strategic level helps to make efficient use of resources and achieve the greatest positive conservation impact by delivering measurable enhancements on the ground.
Following on from the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2015 – 2025) and Local Action Project (2016) it is envisaged that the Biodiversity Opportunity Sites (BOS) will build on this existing work and use a Geographical Information System (GIS) approach to identify potential areas for expansion of key habitats. The main habitat types – woodland, grassland, wetland/open water and hedgerows will provide an evidence base in which to identify further opportunities and to improve and/or contribute to the Nature Recovery Network. This will provide a spatial representation of the BAP habitats in Leicester and the Opportunity Areas

Certain site conditions may in themselves make the sites more suitable for ecological enhancement and less so for development or other land use purposes. These areas will require agreement across council services or private landowners prior to their inclusion in a Biodiversity Opportunity register which will be reviewed and updated from time to time.

Examples where opportunities may exist include:

- Sites within the floodplain, "Flood hot-spots" or "Critical Drainage Areas "
- Former land-fill sites and/or contaminated land
- Former allotment sites
- Regularly maintained and species-poor amenity or under-used sports areas

The Biodiversity Opportunity Sites (BOS) do not represent a statutory designation or a constraint upon activities. Instead, they indicate areas where there are substantial opportunities to make positive changes for biodiversity and to further inform on conservation strategies and place-making to achieve social and economic objectives alongside a thriving natural environment. In this context, they can contribute to the Nature Recovery Network as sites that provide wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them.

Working in partnership at a national and local level will provide further opportunities for strategic planning to help facilitate the creation, enhancement and long-term management of priority habitats in Leicester and Leicestershire.

3.2 UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS AND SPECIES

The UK BAP identified a list of priority habitats and species as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action. Although the original lists were created in 1995 and 1999, they have been updated several times and are still relevant within the current UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework which replaced the UK BAP in July 2012.

The number of priority habitats has increased from the original 49 to 65 and the number of priority species increased from less than 600 to 1,150.

Despite the new drivers and requirements under the UK Biodiversity Framework the lists remain an important reference as required under Sec 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This Act requires statutory authorities (including Local Authorities) to have regard to biodiversity in performing their statutory duties. The habitats and species under Section 41 are described more fully below.

3.2.1 UK AND LOCAL BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan identifies 65 priority habitats of particular national importance. Leicester contains 10 of these UK priority habitats together with localised urban habitats which take account of former industrial sites and a range of green spaces with different land uses. These are still recognised as valuable to wildlife. Table below provides a summary of comparison between the national and local priority terminology.

Numbe	UK BAP Priority Habitat	Leicester BAP Priority	Notes
1	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	Broadleaved Woodland	Exact equivalent between local and national habitat
2	Wet Woodland	Wet Woodland	Exact equivalent between local and national
3	Woodland Pasture and Parkland	Lowland Wood - Pasture and Parkland	Exact equivalent between local and national habitat
4	Hedgerows	Hedgerows	Partial equivalent. Local plan includes hedgerows of local value as well as ancient and species-rich
5		Mature Trees	Local habitat with no national equivalent although referenced in NPPF (2019)
6	1. Eutrophic Standing Water 2. Ponds	Eutrophic Standing Water	Local habitat combines two UK priority habitats
7		Floodplain Wetland	Local habitat with no national equivalent. Covers a range of new and pre-existing wetland habitats
8	Reedbeds	Reedbed	Exact equivalent between local and national
9	Lowland Meadows	Natural Grassland	Equivalent between local and national habitat - but local includes lowland pasture
10	Lowland Calcareous	Calcareous Grassland	Exact equivalent between local and national
11		Parks and Open Spaces	Urban habitat - No national equivalent
12		Allotments	Urban habitat - No national equivalent
13		Churchyards &	Urban habitat - No national equivalent
14	Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed	Brownfield Sites	Partial equivalent
15		Buildings and Built Structures	No national equivalent. Covers man-made structures important for lichens and broyophytes

3.2.2 LOCAL BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

Leicester is the largest city in the East Midlands with a diverse and multi-cultural population of approximately 350 000 (Census 2011). It is the 13th largest city in the UK which covers approximately 75 km^2. Whilst the LLR BAP (2016 – 2026) recognises Leicester as a generic Urban Habitat in recognition of the established road networks and built infrastructure, it does not identify the range and diversity of habitats and species present within this relatively small part of the county.

In Leicester there are a small number of irreplaceable habitats many of which have been designated as nationally or locally important sites (SSSIs, LWS or cLWS). Most of these areas were originally identified in the original Leicester Habitat Survey (1983 – 1986) which was one of the first of its kind in the country.

Further updates were added in the 1990s, followed by a systematic Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Leicester (2006-08) which identified and digitised specific habitats across the city and potential sites of wildlife value. These sites are now systematically reviewed on a rolling schedule to help inform on status/condition, appropriate management, site allocations and opportunities for off-setting and enhancements.

The irreplaceable habitats are:

- Ancient woodlands
- Mature or veteran trees
- Ancient and/or Species-rich hedgerows
- Species-rich neutral, Calcareous and floodplain meadow grassland
- River Soar-Grand Union Canal corridor

3.3 PROTECTED SPECIES

Certain rare, vulnerable or threatened species are given specific protection to sustain their populations. The species found in Leicester are protected mainly by national and European legislation (quite frequently by both) listed below:

- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act 2000)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Intentional or reckless killing or injuring a species and/or disturbing or destroying their habitat can result in a severe fine and/or imprisonment which can run concurrently with each individual animal or plant impacted.

Species	Act
Animals	
Badger	Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
Bats	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000), Habitats & Species Regs (2017)
Barn owl	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000)
Birds (all wild)	W&CA (1981 as amended)
Black redstart	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000)
Great Crested Newt	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000), Habitats & Species Regs (2017)
Kingfisher	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000)
Little ringed plover	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000)
Otter	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000), Habitats & Species Regs (2017)
Water Vole	W&CA (1981 as amended), CROW (2000), Habitats & Species Regs (2017)
Plants	
Bluebell	W&CA (1981 as amended)

3.3.1 UK BAP PRIORITY SPECIES

UK BAP Species are listed as Section 41 Priority Species under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006. Species recorded in Leicester are listed below.

Vertebrates	Common Name	Number of Records 2000 - 2020
Amphibians and Reptiles		
Anguis fragilis	Slow Worm	12
Bufo bufo	Common Toad	175
Triturus cristatus	Great Crested Newt	117
Birds		
Alauda arvensis	Skylark	142
Carduelis cannabina	Linnet	45
Coccothraustes coccothraustes	Hawfinch	3
Cuculus canorus	Common Cuckoo	35
Emberiza citrinella	Yellowhammer	86
Emberiza shcoeniclus	Reed Bunting	541
Miliaria calandra	Corn Bunting	2
Muscicapa striata	Spotted Flycatcher	80
Passer montanus	Tree Sparrow	38
Poecile montanus	Willow Tit	48
Poecile palustris	Marsh Tit	15
Passer domesticus	House Sparrow	720
Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Bullfinch	658
Streptopelia turtur	Turtle Dove	4
Sturnus vulgaris subsp. vulgaris	Common Starling	654
Turdus philomelos	Song Thrush	1211
Mammals		
Arvicola amphibius	Water Vole	22
Erinaceus europaeus	West European Hedgehog	774
Lepus europaeus	Brown Hare	32
Lutra lutra	Otter	119
Micromys minutus	Harvest Mouse	7
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule Bat	114
Plecotus auritus	Brown Long-eared Bat	76
Pipistrelllus pygmaeus	Soprano Pipistrelle	84
Higher Plants		
Vascular Plants		
Potamogeton compressus	Grass-wrack Pondweed	
Campanula patula	Spreading Bellflower	
Euphrasia anglica	Glandular Eyebright	
Oenanthe fistulosa	Tubular Water-dropwort	
Fungi		
Buglossoporus pulvinus = Piptoporus quercinus	Oak Polypore	

3.3.2 LOCAL BAP PRIORITY SPECIES

A recent update of the LLR BAP 2016 – 2026 has a total of 16 Species Action Plans. Those species of flora and fauna found in the city are prioritised for conservation and reference should be made to the LLR BAP for relevant actions indicated below.

There are also important species associated with urban environments present in Leicester, but are not within the LLR BAP. These include birds such as the Black redstart, Peregrine and Swifts which are largely associated with buildings and the built environment, together with the West European hedgehog frequently found in gardens and parks in densely built-up areas.

The two BAPs also differ in their actions to conserve these species due to the range of habitats available at the strategic level compared to those found in Leicester with its large urban area, built environment and more formal areas of green space. The table shows the species relevant to Leicester and if an associated Species Action Plan is available in the LLR BAP.

Species	Leicester BAP	LLR BAP
Birds		
Barn Owl	No – but relevant in limited habitat	Refer to BAP
Black redstart	Yes – relevant actions for City	No
Peregrine falcon	Yes – relevant actions for City	No
Sand martin	No – but relevant in limited habitat	Refer to BAP
Swifts, Swallows and House Martins	Yes – relevant actions for City	Yes – relevant actions for both
Mammals		
All Bats	Yes – relevant actions for some bat	Yes – relevant actions for both
Hedgehog	Yes – relevant actions for City	No
Otter	Yes – relevant actions for City	Yes – relevant actions for both
Water vole	Yes – relevant actions for City	Yes – relevant actions for both
Plants		
Black poplar	Yes – relevant actions for City	Yes – relevant actions for both

3.3.3 LEICESTERSHIRE RED DATA BOOK SPECIES

The Leicestershire Red Data Books (RDB) were produced in partnership with Leicestershire County Council Museums Arts and Records Service (LMARS) in the 1990s. They identified the types of plants and animals most at risk and considered endangered and in serious decline from changes in agriculture, quarrying and development. A core list of species considered “rare” in the county or Vice County (VC) 55 checklist totalled almost 1000 species. Some of check-lists and RDBs have been updated for certain species groups.

The Red data books have been compiled by local specialists and updated editions have been edited by the LRERC and refereed by a panel of specialists. Evidence of established populations differ between species groups, but generally the following apply:

Flowering Plants	Recorded within the previous 30 years and if the species has been searched for and not found in 5 consecutive surveys over a period of 5 years or more, it cannot be used to designate a LWS.
Invertebrates, Fish	Recorded in their breeding, roosting, feeding or hibernation habitat in the previous 20 years
Mammals, Reptiles	Recorded in their breeding, roosting, feeding or hibernation habitat in the previous 20 years
Amphibians	Recorded in their breeding, roosting, feeding or hibernation habitat in the previous 20 years. They should be represented by populations as listed in the species assemblage criteria
Birds	Recorded breeding or roosting consistently or using the site consistently on passage or during the winter

3.4 HABITAT AND SPECIES ACTION PLANS

Leicester’s Habitat and Species Action Plans (HAPs and SAPs) have been agreed in consultation and discussion with stakeholders and partners involved in nature conservation in the City.
Specific habitats and species together with actions are described in Part 2 of Leicester’s BAP. The habitats include a number of irreplaceable and also generic habitats such as Parks and Allotments managed for wildlife and to enhance biodiversity.

Sites which include Churchyards and Cemeteries, domestic gardens and privately owned green space are all recognised for their biodiversity value, but do not warrant a separate Action Plan. Actions for these sites are likely to be included in Community-based actions taken by individuals rather than that of the local authority.

Naturally vegetated areas which may be common and widespread within an urban context are not identified as particular priority habitats or within Habitat Action Plans, but should nevertheless not go unrecognised. Whilst limiting opportunities for anti-social behaviour and keeping sites safe with open and clear routes that can be easily surveilled, sites that contain areas of scrub with associated species such as Bramble, Blackthorn, Dog-rose and tall herbs such as Willow herbs, Goosefoot and Cow Parsley are especially important for supporting species such as pollinating insects, nesting birds – especially Starling roosts, small mammals and reptiles.

Across the city, these sites occur frequently and provide a mechanism of dispersal that fits into the wider green network. They should be considered in relation to the species and significant biodiversity they support in a local context. Even small or low distinctive habitat patches may be important if they are able to be part of a wider Nature Recovery Network or are in a desirable location that will remain

Chapter 4.0 Biodiversity and People

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

4.0 Biodiversity and People

4.1 HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT

The benefits of working in partnership to achieve a greater end result and get more people involved in a common goal to raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity are well recognised and increase the likelihood of success

The history of engagement has evolved from a commitment at an international, national and local level for the last 20 years very similar to the commitment to conserve and enhance our habitats and species. A brief summary is provided to set the context. Whilst it is recognised that the ability to achieve many of the actions and objectives set out in the Habitat and Species Action Plans will involve public engagement and raising awareness, the international and national recognition of this requirement sets the wider role of engagement and awareness raising at all levels and so is included in Part 1 of the Plan.

4.1.1 INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 agreed at the Convention on Biodiversity in Japan (2011) refers to specific goals and actions to be achieved by 2020. At the forefront of this was a commitment to raise awareness and to get people engaged in the process of understanding the importance of biodiversity at all levels of government and society. Two specific goals identified this need

Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society;
Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

Supporting targets identified the significance of public engagement stipulated:

Goal A: Target 1 – By 2020 at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably;
Goal A: Target 2 – By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development … and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting – and reporting systems;
Goal E: Target 17 – By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan;
Goal E: Target 19 – By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

4.1.2 NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

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. This included reference to the Aichi targets and identified two key priority actions for engagement and awareness.

i) Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy (Engagement). The strategy recognised that "It is crucial to engage more people in biodiversity issues so that they personally value biodiversity and know what they can do to help. Civil society organisations play a frontline role, directly engaging and enthusing the public about biodiversity. We will work with them to engage more people and empower them to make a difference".

ii) Improving our knowledge (Awareness raising) The strategy recognised the importance of providing a good evidence base to understand the status and trends in biodiversity and to work with a wide biodiversity partnership to deliver the strategy.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (Defra 2018) also contains an action to "Connect people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing".

The first target although perhaps not directly related to biodiversity, is particularly important in considering the short and longer term impacts of Covid-19 by "Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces" and specifically "promoting health and wellbeing through the natural environment." Additional targets include "Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school" by:

i) Helping primary schools create nature-friendly grounds; and ii) Supporting pupil contact with local natural spaces

"Green our towns and cities" by:

i) Creating more green infrastructure and ii) planting more trees in and around our towns and cities; and "Making 2019 a Year of Action for the environment" by:

i) Helping children and young people from all backgrounds to engage with nature and improve the environment; and ii) Supporting the 2019 Year of Green Action

Evidence from studies and research has shown the value that nature brings to people, providing powerful psychological, educational and health benefits which allow people to lead happier and healthier lives.

4.1.3 LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

Leicester has a strong legacy of encouraging public participation in biodiversity management and nature conservation. Over the last 30 years the council has worked closely with other conservation organisations such as Environ, Groundwork, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT), NatureSpot and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to encourage community participation in local conservation projects and coordinate volunteers across the city. The council has also set up its own Leicester Environmental Volunteers (LEV) and hosts a varied programme of conservation work on its most ecologically valuable sites working with volunteers from local communities.

The previous BAP (2011-2021) set out specific aims to raise awareness of biodiversity in Leicester and to encourage public participation. Much of this focus was on getting people involved in voluntary work and making a physical contribution to improving areas by, for example, putting up bird and bat boxes, making Insect hotels, removing scrub from meadow and grassland areas, tree-planting and managing woodlands. Many volunteers took part in tasks on organised Environment Days at LNRs and parks.
Friends of Groups (FOGs) and Park User Groups (PUGs) have also been set up with the help of conservation organisations or the council to help support local sites close to residential areas. Many are associated with nature reserves and parks. Examples include Aylestone Meadows Appreciation Society (AMAS), Knighton Wild, Highway Spinney FoG and Castle Hill Country Park FoG.

Local projects such as the Urban Buzz Project, a partnership between the council and Buglife, focussed on the conservation of pollinators and trained volunteers to monitor and survey sites. Awareness raising of the importance of pollinators and the habitats needed to conserve their populations was a major part of the project. Engaging with the local authority and private landowners on best practice to manage areas effectively, implement Plans and Strategies and work with partners was key to the success of this project.

The Swift Project Partnership has also encouraged public engagement and awareness raising at various levels. People have been encouraged to send in sightings of Swifts and where they nest; planning approvals frequently require the installation of swift bricks and boxes to help conserve this species in specific parts of the city; information leaflets have been produced by partners and made available on websites to further inform planners, developers, businesses and householders of what they can do to help this particular species.

Similarly, the Hedgehog Project engaged with the public by asking people if hedgehogs visited their gardens and how they could help them. Partners involved in Hedgehog Conservation encourage people to report sightings or take in rescued hedgehogs and release them back into safe environments. The council and record centre record species presence and this helps to inform on potential constraints to projects and opportunities for habitat creation and installation of boxes within development schemes.

Leicester is also part of the Eco-Schools global programme aimed at raising awareness of environmental issues and empowering young people to drive change. The councils Environment Education Co-ordinator and the Forest Schools programme led by organisations such as The Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust have encouraged schools to design and create their own nature areas, learn about the wildlife that uses them and completed conservation tasks in nearby parks to help the wider environment.

The council and numerous partners have worked hard to engage people and make them aware of the wildlife on their doorstep. Encouraging people to record wildlife in the city has taken place through a series of annual BioBlitz events that have been run across the City over the last ten years alongside specialists and BAP partners. This has resulted in over 10 000 people taking part and finding out about the wildlife that lives on their doorstep and has helped to record nearly 5000 plants and animals in Leicester. The collected data are submitted to the Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre (LRERC) to help inform on how best to manage sites to help conserve or increase populations of species that may be under threat.

4.2 ACTIONS TO ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT

To engage people in environmental issues such as biodiversity there is a need for people to connect with nature with a clear and compelling message about its importance and what we risk in depleting it.
The council continues to be committed to protecting and enhancing local biodiversity and work with BAP partners to help local communities to appreciate and recognise the value their local space for wildlife and to get involved. Encouraging people to visit these areas by making them safe, accessible and attractive is advocated in a number of Strategies and Plans – helping them to stay that way is a big part of how the community can help.

Whilst Part 2 of this Plan concentrates on the specific actions that can be achieved to conserve and enhance certain habitats and associated species, each Habitat or Species Action Plan also includes specific actions to encourage people to get involved at a local level. The Action Plans also include awareness raising at a strategic level and ways people can get involved. Although there is undoubtedly some crossover between awareness raising and getting people involved, the council and its BAP partners are committed to facilitating the following actions:

4.2.1 AWARENESS RAISING

There is a recognised need to raise awareness of biodiversity and nature conservation to everyone living, working or visiting Leicester and the surrounds. The people involved include partner organisations, local government officials, council services, schools, students as well as local communities, action groups and visitors.

Publicity and Marketing

- Give the BAP and other associated documents a readily identified branding that people understand and know what it represents
- Publish the annual "Making Wildlife Count" report to raise awareness of local projects completed with local people in and around Leicester and how they can get involved in future projects;
- Provide a quarterly newsletter of local projects, training, events and how people can get involved – to be made available on the council and partner websites and local distribution to public places;

Project Planning, Design and Delivery

- Maximise publicity before, during and on completion of green projects especially where multiple partners are involved;
- Promote good practice of green projects and case studies on the council's and BAP partners websites and/or appropriate publications to help inform on sites where wildlife is thriving as a result of habitat creation and/or good management;

Information

- Review and update the council webpages with suggestions on how individuals, local businesses, schools and local landowners can contribute towards improving our natural environment;
- Set-up links and virtual partnerships with other leading cities to promote biodiversity and good practice e.g. London, Sheffield, Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham
- Engage with other Service areas which have a green remit to increase opportunities for biodiversity enhancement e.g. Allotments and Food Plan, Health & Well-being and association with visiting green space

Research, Monitoring and Data Collation

- Work with existing recorder groups to increase membership and to identify sites to survey to increase our knowledge and understanding;
- Update and increase the number of "Wild Places" on the local NatureSpot website to encourage people to sign-up and record wildlife in their local area;
- Work with Universities to use Leicester as a case study area research related to biodiversity issues e.g. impacts on biodiversity from human disturbance, adaptation of wildlife in cities, climate change on species populations/ dispersal etc

Training

- Organise training seminars for Service areas and Boards to update on changing legislation and statutory responsibilities
- Raise awareness of wildlife and biodiversity issues across council service areas by training individuals/groups and creating Biodiversity champions;
- Organise training days on conservation management of grassland, wetlands/ponds, trees/woodlands for council and BAP partners

Events

- Set up and run a number of organised displays each year to coincide with national species or conservation days to raise awareness of how people can be involved with BAP partners;
- Investigate potential for hosting regional/national urban biodiversity conference/seminar to share best practice working with partners such as Natural England and the Wildlife Trust to facilitate;

Schools

- Work more closely with Schools and the Biodiversity agenda by encouraging schools to participate in national and international projects e.g. Earthwatch and to identify key themes that are relevant to the national curriculum and promoted each year – link in with Climate Change agenda where possible;
- Set-up Biodiversity-school hubs around Leicester to promote good practice and training with key schools acting as facilitator for others to visit and share good practice/teaching – aimed and students and parents;

4.2.2 PARTICIPATION

A key part of the Plan is to involve people with nature conservation and wildlife so that they are encouraged to get involved and can see how the diversity of flora and fauna may benefit from their actions. The council and BAP partners will find new and varied ways of helping people to engage with biodiversity in the city.

Partnership Working

- Continue to be an active partner in key partnerships involved in the delivery of green infrastructure and biodiversity projects in Leicester e.g. Soar & GUC Partnership, UoL Biodiversity Working Group, Soar Catchment Partnership,

Volunteers

- Continue to expand the Leicester Environment Volunteers (LEV) network of volunteering programmes and groups involved with works on our nature reserves, local wildlife sites and country parks;
- Work closely with other conservation volunteer organisations such as TCV and the Wildlife Trust to maximise volunteer involvement across our nature areas;
- Seek out opportunities and grants that support voluntary and community groups with projects which support and assist protecting the natural environment;

Research, Monitoring and Data Recording

- Work with local Universities to encourage their involvement on sites for local research, teaching purposes, conservation volunteer tasks – both on their own land and the wider areas of green space in Leicester;
- Set-up Citizen Science monitoring projects to get people involved in monitoring changes in flora and fauna across a range of sites and different habitats

Events

- Organise Citizen-science based events to record wildlife across sites with partners and involve local schools and community recoding alongside naturalists and specialists;
- Work with Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust in their "30 Days Wild" or similar events to encourage activities and run events associated with nature
- Link with other LCC services (Walking and Cycling team) and external services to provide guided walks for people to learn about wildlife in local green spaces and encourage them to visit them more frequently for leisure or to connect to other parts of the city on short utility journeys.

Chapter 5.0 Biodiversity - Planning and regulator

Leicester's
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5.0 Biodiversity - Planning and regulator

This section considers the duties and responsibilities of statutory authorities in having regard to biodiversity. In addition to any wildlife legislation specifically aimed at protecting and conserving designated sites, habitats and species (see Section 3) there are other responsibilities for statutory authorities to consider referred to in this section.

5.1 STATUTORY DUTY

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) Sec 40 provides that any public body or statutory undertaker in England and Wales must have regard to the purpose of conservation of biological diversity in the exercise of their functions. The intention is to help ensure that biodiversity becomes an integral consideration in the development of policies, and decisions of public bodies work with the grain of nature and not against it.

The government has continued to support the Priority Habitat and Species Lists first identified in the 1994/95 UK BAP and updated on several occasions since. Those habitats and species most relevant and found in Leicester are described in Section 3 and remain a material consideration in planning decisions.

The main area in which the council and other statutory authorities such as the Environment Agency and Natural England have a role in conserving biodiversity in the city is:

- Developing and influencing local policies and strategies
- Planning and development control
- Owning and managing land and waterways
- Procurement
- Education and Awareness Raising

Leicester's Parks, Planning. Flooding, Environmental, Sustainability and Education Services have already gone along way, but the city council recognises the need to integrate biodiversity considerations into other service areas and functions. Some of the specific land uses such as Parks, Allotments and Cemeteries have been highlighted in the Habitat Action Plans to identify opportunities that can be achieved.

The council and other BAP partners sit on the conservation boards of various Partnerships of which statutory authorities participate allowing joint decision-making in fulfilling their duties. Where joint responsibility across several statutory authorities such as our waterways exists, it is particularly important that organisations work together to optimise opportunities for biodiversity enhancements and the safeguarding and recovery of species.

5.2 NATIONAL POLICY

The 25-Year Environment Plan (2018) sets out the key policy requirements to safeguard habitats and species across England, to raise awareness of biodiversity trends and encourage participation to help with the recovery of habitats and species as well as help with health and well-being (see Section 2 and Part 2 Section 1). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 now contains polices to help implement the key aims set out in the 25-year Plan.

Recent and significant changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 now stipulate that Planning policies and decisions should **contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.** This requires that sites of biodiversity value should be identified and protected in the development plan.

There is also emphasis on providing **net gains for biodiversity,** including the establishment of **coherent ecological networks** that are more resilient to current and future pressures. These networks of habitats and green infrastructure should be maintained and enhanced at a landscape or catchment-scale.

The NPPF goes on to state that plans to protect and enhance biodiversity (and geo-diversity) should **identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks,** including designated sites at an international, national and local level – and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity (such as LWS); wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them.

In order to address the above and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancements of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of protected species; it is necessary to pursue opportunities to **secure measurable net gains in biodiversity.**

Local Planning Authorities are asked to implement a Mitigation Hierarchy in considering the impacts on biodiversity. Steps must first be taken to avoid any likely significant impact to biodiversity. If this is not possible, it will be necessary to show how the unavoidable impacts can be **mitigated** by taking steps on site to minimise the duration, intensity and/or extent of impacts that cannot be avoided. Importantly, the framework sets out that planning permission should be refused if significant harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, **compensated** for.

Where all on-site mitigation options have been exhausted then compensation off-site should be considered which could involve major habitat restoration or creation to make up for the habitat lost to development and in doing so contribute to the Nature Recovery Network (see Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain)

5.3 LOCAL POLICY – LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN

The Leicester Local Plan (LLP) is currently under review during which public consultation will take place prior to its adoption. Leicester's new Local Plan will set out provision for additional homes, schools and employment land in the city as well as how the sites of biodiversity value will be protected from development and ecological networks created and maintained (referenced in the LLP Natural Environment chapter).

This provides an opportunity for the BAP to be an important and relevant source of evidence and information and to focus actions to contribute to habitat creation/restoration and species recovery whilst achieving a **net gain in biodiversity** across Leicester. Those benefits associated with bio-diverse green space will also support well-being, recreation and social inclusion by contributing to all of the Council's core priorities.

The Council has developed a series of policies which will be adopted subject to consultation and examination, but which provisionally include a section on the Natural Environment and policies on Biodiversity, Biodiversity Net Gain and Green Infrastructure.

5.3.1 STRATEGIC APPROACH TO BIODIVERSITY

The council and its BAP partners advocate the protection and enhancement for biodiversity within Leicester through a strategic approach to deliver sustainable development. It considers the wider approach to incorporate Green/Blue Infrastructure and aims to develop a comprehensive network of multi-functional green space that will provide benefits to people living, working and visiting Leicester.

Areas of connected green space can be created, protected and enhanced which will benefit biodiversity across the city. This particularly identifies the need to ensure existing wildlife sites are adequately protected; improving connectivity between habitats within areas of strong biodiversity and ensuring areas of lower value are better connected within the wider biodiversity/green network.

The LLP will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the city in the following areas:

- Ensuring mechanisms are in place to assess the impacts of new development at a local and landscape level by evaluating their biodiversity impact on species, habitat quality and connectivity to help better inform development decisions and secure mitigation and enhancement where appropriate;
- Evaluating opportunities and formalising a process for Biodiversity off-setting through the development of a system for biodiversity accounting to achieve net gain in planning applications and its adoption and implementation into the planning and development process;
- Developing and securing biodiversity enhancement projects through s106 planning obligations or similar mechanisms from appropriate development to off-set any loss of biodiversity which cannot be avoided or mitigated on site.
- Assessing and recording existing designated sites and Priority Habitats that form part of the green network and to asses sand identify sites where biodiversity opportunities may be present to restore or enhance habitats and contribute to the overall Nature Recovery Network within Leicester and its surrounds;
- Implementation of Leicester's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2015 – 2025) and BAP action plans to comply with LLP Natural Environment policies relating to Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.3.2 DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The Environment Bill was introduced to parliament in October 2019 to support the delivery of the 25 Year Environmental Plan (2018) – see section 2.2.1 – and sets out the key environmental responsibilities of the government which had previously been held by the European Union (EU). This includes a framework by which Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) can be delivered by local authorities to achieve a net gain in biodiversity from development that leaves it in a better state than before. The principles set out to encourage developers to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being impacted. In doing so, the current loss of biodiversity across the country is hoped to be halted and ecological networks restored.

BNG still relies on the principles of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid, mitigate and compensate for biodiversity losses, but provides opportunities to enhance or restore key habitats or to create new habitats and contribute further to the ecological network. BNG will take place on Priority sites already within the green network or on new sites identified as Biodiversity Opportunity Sites (BOS) and contribute to the local Nature Recovery Network. The sites may be on publically or privately owned land, generally of poor or declining ecological value and preferably strategically located to contribute to and enhance connectivity and permeability of sites across the city.

5.4 SURVEY, MONITOR AND REVIEW

Having a strong evidence base and sound knowledge of our biodiversity resource is essential for good planning. This helps to develop policies based on robust evidence, to assist with decision-making through development control and to determine how the Nature Recovery Network can enhance the existing green network. This was seen as a key requirement in the 2011 BAP framework Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' and Target 17 of the Aichi Targets (See Section 4.1.2) and has been updated in the 25-year Plan.

Although still to be enacted, the Environment Bill refers to the formation of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) responsible for monitoring progress in improving the natural environment through the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs). The Bill proposes a series of measures that will try to secure a systematic and consistent approach in securing biodiversity in England.
It is also essential as a way of monitoring our impacts on biodiversity and to identify indicators that can be used to show the status or condition of sites and the health of fauna they support.

5.4.1 BIODIVERSITY CONDITION

Leicester has a legacy of good environmental data recording which dates back to the 1980s when organisations such as the Wildlife Trust and Environ had responsibility for managing green sites across the city and monitoring their condition. The former A* graded sites later became Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), and were later re-named as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

The majority of green space in Leicester was later assessed and broad habitat categories assigned using the Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC) Phase 1 Habitat Mapping methodology and aerial photograph interpretation during 2006-08. Target notes were also made of particular features to record diversity of vegetation and species presence through observations and tracks or field signs noted during the survey. These target notes have only a limited value for a short period due to the likelihood of changes occurring on the ground as sites are developed, land use changes or different management regimes are used.

Since 2010 a systematic process of survey, monitor and review of designated sites along with the wider natural environment has been undertaken to keep the Phase 1 data relevant for Planning purposes and to allow for review and assessment of species data to help prioritise Plans, Projects and Strategies.

The changes have been made using a GIS mapping system to show the different habitat types, designations and overlaid with Species presence. A thorough review of the data using this system along with other works associated with mapping of the Green/Blue Infrastructure will more fully inform on the Biodiversity Opportunity Sites (BOS) and contributions necessary to achieve those habitats deemed appropriate.

5.4.2 INFORMATION AND DATA

Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre (LRERC) is a major partner of Leicester City Council that helps to collate, evaluate and share biodiversity information. A data exchange has been agreed with them and this information is regularly shared which provides updates on surveys undertaken in our parks, nature reserves and other designated sites as well as ensuring that all ecological surveys submitted as part of the planning processes are shared with LRERC.

5.4.3 SITE ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATION

5.4.3.1 LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE SURVEYS

The quality and extent of Leicester's Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) is assessed annually by the city council as part of a wider monitoring exercise connected to the annual Environment Statement produced by the council and the Single-Status reporting to central government. There are a number of assessment criteria used based on the diversity of flora, size and quality of habitat and its general condition such as whether it is improving or deteriorating due to management and other pressures on land use. Where sites have been designated for certain species, their presence/absence and any increase or decrease in their population is considered in the review and evaluation.

The survey data are retained by the city council in local reports and schedules to inform on the annual Environment Statement. These records are also regularly collated and forwarded to the LRERC and they provide an evidence base for the Local Plan review and Site Allocation process.
Habitat and Species data are collated through a number of means:

- Qualified ecologists undertaking Phase 1 Habitat and Species Surveys
- Ecology surveys completed as part of the planning process and submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA)
- Ecology surveys submitted for licence applications to undertake works impacting on Protected Species
- Specialists, Recorders and Naturalists (groups and individuals) undertaking surveys in their own specialism
- Citizen Science projects and events where local people collect wildlife data which is then verified by specialists
- Ad-hoc data collected from the public who report sightings and which is verified by specialists

5.4.3.2 BIODIVERISTY NET GAIN MONITORING

The Environment Bill refers to the formation of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) responsible for monitoring progress in improving the natural environment through the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs)

At the time of writin, the OEP may also be responsible for setting targets that relate to people's enjoyment of the natural environment, access and use as well as specifically on the delivery of habitat creation and its appropriate management in the longer-term. Such targets will specify an objectively measurable standard to be achieved by set dates.

5.5 LEICESTER'S STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The Council has many strategies and plans (See Section 2.3) which set out the aims and objectives of the council and its partners to maximise sustainability. They are generally in place for a three, five or 10 year period and often have targets and actions attached to monitoring progress. When subject to review, the council will update plans and reference how biodiversity can be implemented into the main stream functions of the different Service areas responsible for their plans. In the meantime, the council and BAP partners will continue to work closely to advise and implement biodiversity in the early stages of any project and to maximise any enhancements wherever possible.

5.6 PLANNING, POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The following objectives relate specifically to the implementation of Planning, Policy and Legislation and have been identified by the city council and BAP partners as helping to achieve the vision for biodiversity in Leicester whilst also helping to contribute to towards the national outcomes for biodiversity.

The council as statutory authority will be responsible for monitoring performance of biodiversity net gain, the creation or restoration of habitats and species recovery which will be subject to further information from central government and the newly formed OEP. Whilst some of the objectives set will require further plans to be developed to secure a process, many others are under way and in progress. It is also expected that the BAP partners will be assisted by many other organisations in Leicester and Leicestershire who will help in achieving these objectives.

Aims

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery
- Promote biodiversity conservation as an essential element of sustainable development and adaptation to climate

Objective	Action	Achieve by	Lead
1.1 Incorporate legislation, policies and guidance into Local Plan	Encourage and support adoption of the Local Plan with relevant polices on biodiversity and BNG to promote	2021-22	LCC - Planning
1.2 Policies and Strategies to conserve, restore or enhance	Implement mitigation hierarchy to avoid loss of priority habitats wherever	On-going	LCC
1.3 LCC environmental strategies and plans support biodiversity and are fit for purpose	Review and agree updates in revised documents and where necessary provide addendum to existing		
	Review to ensure compliance and that biodiversity measure are incorporated into sustainable development	On-going	LCC
1.4 Comply with all updated UK/EU and international legislation post-Brexit	Implement changes in statutory decision making e.g. Planning applications and policy where required	On-going	LCC – Nat Con
Objective	**Action**	**Achieve by**	**Lead**
1.5 Create a Nature Recovery Network map	Survey and map green network of designated sites, BOS and priority habitats for creation or restoration that will improve connectivity and	June/July 2021	LCC – Nat Con
	Encourage targeted habitat creation within BOS and NRN	On-going	LCC - Planning
	Promote BOS in the planning system to guide developers to the best location		
	Promote the use of BOS when guiding nature conservation effort and funding	On-going	LCC – Nat Con
Objective	**Action**	**Achieve by**	**Lead**
1.6 Secure an implementable process for biodiversity off-setting	Consider all options for agreement and legal processes to secure payments and long-term management	2021/22	LCC - Planning

Chapter 6.0 Acronyms

Leicester's **Biodiversity Action Plan**

6.0 Acronyms

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BES	Biodiversity Enhancement Site
BOM	Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping
BOS	Biodiversity Opportunity Sites
CDM	Community Development Team
CROW	Countryside & Rights of Way
CRT	Canal & River Trust
EA	Environment Agency
ELMS	Environmental Land Management Scheme
EU	European Union
FOGS	Friends of Groups
GI	Green Infrastructure
GUC	Grand Union Canal
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
INNS	Invasive Non-native Species
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservancy Council
Leics CC	Leicestershire County Council
LCC	Leicester City Council
LEV	Leicester Environmental Volunteers
LLEP	Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership
LLR	Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland
LNP	Local Nature Partnership
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LNRS	Local Nature Recovery Strategies
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LROS	Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society
LSAP	Leicester Sustainability Action Plan
LRWT	Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NCO	Nature Conservation Officer
NE	Natural England
NIA	Natural Improvement Area
PDT	Parks Development Team
PGM	Parks Grounds Maintenance
PUGS	Park User Groups
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SPP	Swift Partnership Project
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes

Chapter 7.0 Glossary

Leicester's
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7.0 Glossary

106 Agreements: Legal agreements or undertakings under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act that ensure developers contribute towards infrastructure and services necessary to facilitate proposed development - also known as Planning Obligations.

Accessible Natural Green space Standards (ANGSt): Standards set to recognise the importance of nature in an urban context to improve the quality of people's lives and people's entitlement to have access to, and experience of nature near to where they live.

Backland Development: Development on land that lies to the rear of an existing property that often, but not in all cases, fronts a road. It usually applies to housing and is normally associated with small-scale development,. Access can be from the road serving the original properties from the front or from the side

Biodiversity Enhancement Sites (BES): Sites of wildlife value that do not meet the LWS criteria, but have potential to be improved to enhance their biodiversity value. The sites usually provide a function to protect sites as a buffer to a LNR or LWS or link areas of green space by providing a corridor to assist with dispersal Blue Infrastructure: Describes riverine and coastal environments with a green infrastructure network.

Blue Links: Fulfil the same functions as green links but their proximity to floodplain and wetland may require different approaches to design and management

Capital Costs: Cost for investment activities e.g. implementation of projects (including construction and enabling clearance and demolition or remediation works)

Climate Change Adaptation: The ability of a place to adapt to both extreme weather events and long-term changes to climate patterns

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): A planning charge introduced by the Government through the Planning Act 2008, which allows local authorities to raise funds from developments to pay for the infrastructure that is needed as a result

Community Strategies: District and county authorities have a duty to prepare Community Strategies under the Local Government Act 2000. These identify the needs and aspirations of local communities and opportunities for realising them. Community Strategies are prepared by LSPs where established. Constraints Map: Map showing the location of important resources and receptors that may form constraints to development.

Development Plan Document (DPD): Forms part of the statutory development plan/Local Plan which can include Core Strategy, area wide policies, topic policies, area action plans, proposals map and site allocations but would not include Statement of Community Involvement or Supplementary Planning Documents.

Ecological Footprint: A measure of how much productive land and water an individual, a city, a country or humanity requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb the waste it generates, using prevailing technology. The land could be anywhere in the world, is measured in global hectares (gha) and always refers to one year. If the footprint refers to one person the unit is given in global hectares per capita (gha/cap).

Ecological Network: Identification of key wildlife corridors and opportunities for connectivity/strategic links in implementing/delivering BAP targets and to assist in reversing habitat fragmentation

Ecosystem Services: Essential services and benefits derived from a fully functioning natural environment, including management of basic resources e.g. water, sequestration of carbon

Geographical Information System (GIS): Computerised database of geographical information that can easily be updated and manipulated

Green Infrastructure: Network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and adjacent to the City of Leicester and its administrative boundary and which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. In the same way that the transport infrastructure is made up of a network of roads, railways, airports etc. green infrastructure has its own physical components, including parks, rivers, street trees and moorland.

Green Infrastructure Study: A report which assimilates baseline information for GI for a given location e.g. local standards, initiatives and establishment of environmental character; It may also investigate deficiency and needs based on projected growth and identify opportunities.

Green Infrastructure Strategy: Builds on a GI study approach to develop a GI hierarchy and identify/prioritise and phase projects through an Action Plan or Implementation Strategy; It provides information on capital and revenue costs, management needs, funding streams and delivery partners, but may vary with the scale of the strategy. This often forms the evidence base for the SPD/AAP

Green Network: The linking together of natural, semi-natural and man-made open spaces to create an interconnected network that provides opportunities for physical activity, accessibility within settlements and to surrounding countryside while enhancing biodiversity and the quality of external environment.

Growth Point: means by which local authorities can pursue large scale, sustainable growth, in partnership with central government and other local partners. Four key principles, required are i) early delivery of housing as part of growth plans, ii) supporting local partners to achieve sustainable growth, iii) working with local partners to ensure infrastructure and service provision keep pace with growth, and iv) ensuring effective delivery.

Green Space: Classified within typology devised by Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17): Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.

Green Space Strategies: Evaluate publicly accessible open space provision within these typologies at the local authority scale, noting issues related to condition, quality and access, often to inform a strategy and action plan that sets out future management and regeneration policies

Green Space Supplementary Planning Document (Green Space SPD): outlines the process for determining the amount of green space that new development would need and the mechanism for calculating developer contributions to enhance existing green space if it is not possible to provide on-site green space.

Green Wedge: An area of land designated in Development Plans that restricts new built development to achieve specific purposes, e.g. retaining separation between rural communities. Green Belts are expected to offer long-term certainty, with their boundaries being altered only in exceptional circumstances.

Heat Island Effect: Surfaces that were once permeable and moist become impermeable and dry as infrastructure develops. These changes cause urban regions to become warmer than their rural surroundings, forming an "island" of higher temperatures in the landscape.

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS): A government voluntary scheme open to all farmers, land managers and tenants in England designed to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority areas. Under review and change with Agricultural Act 2020/21

Housing Market Area (HMA): A geographical area which reflecting choice of location for a new home i.e. a large percentage of people settling in the area will have sought a house only in that area

Landcover: Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface

Landscape Analysis: Process of evaluating different components of the landscape - used in landscape ecology based studies and methodologies.

Landscape Capacity: Evaluation of landscape character type/area to accommodate change without adverse impacts. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.

Landscape Character: Distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in types of landscape, and how this is perceived by people; It reflects combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA): An approach to assessing and recording features and characteristics that constitutes a particular landscape as a basis for informed planning and policy decisions that respect and enhance that character and a local sense of place. Natural England has completed such an assessment across England, but does not include urban green site assessment.

Landscape Classification: Landscape sorted into different typologies using selected criteria but without attaching relative values to the different kinds of landscapes

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): brings together organisations from public, private, community and voluntary sector in a local authority area. The key objective of the LSP is to improve the quality of life in that area.

Landscape Quality / Condition: Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape based on intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives

Landscape Sensitivity: The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character

Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society (LROS): Not-for-profit charitable organisation made up of volunteer members aimed at promoting the study, conservation and enjoyment of birds and birding in Leicestershire and Rutland

Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT): Not-for-Profit charitable organisation – part of national Wildlife Trust, but local branch covers Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland. Manage own nature reserves, encourages volunteers, conducts surveys, provides advice and comments on local and national nature conservation issues.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs): Produced by local partnerships and reflect local priorities to conserve wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms that contribute to local, regional and national biodiversity. Recognise contribution biodiversity gives to quality of life and local distinctiveness, contributing to the well-being of local communities.

Local Development Framework (LDF): Replacements for Structure and Local Plans and produced by local planning authorities and comprise a series of documents including a Core Strategy, Area Action Plans for areas of change or conservation and Supplementary Planning Documents. The Core Strategy and Area Action Plans have statutory ‘development plan’ status.

Local Nature Partnership (LNP): Are partnerships from a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people who aim to help bring about improvements in their local natural environment

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): Areas of land designated by a local authority under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 which provide protection for sites of special local interest for nature and offer opportunities for environmental education and community involvement. They deliver a range of benefits to local communities and to visitors.

Local Planning Authority (LPA): A local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise statutory town planning functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom

Local Wildlife Site (LWS): Non-statutory sites of local importance for nature conservation that complement designated geological and wildlife sites

Multifunctionality: The ability to provide multiple or ‘cross cutting’ functions, by integrating different activities and land usage on individual sites and across a whole green infrastructure network

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): sets out Governments planning policies and its requirements within the planning system in England. It provides a framework for local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM): Created as a central government department in May 2002; It is responsible for policy on housing, planning, regional and local government and the fire service.

Planning Obligations: Legal agreements or undertakings under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act; they provide a means of ensuring developers contribute towards infrastructure and services to facilitate development - also known as 106 Agreements

Planning Policy Statements / Planning Policy Guidance (PPS / PPG): Government’s national policies on planning applied throughout England and focus on procedural policy and process of preparing local development documents. These policies have now been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Principle Urban Areas (PUA): An urban area includes the historical core municipality, and the adjacent suburbs, but not the exurbs, which are not connected by continuous development to the urban area

Public Open Space: Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground
Public Rights of Way (PROW): Paths on which public have a legally protected right to pass and re-pass. Paths are shown on a Definitive Map as required by The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000

Quality of Life Assessment: A tool for maximising environmental, economic and social benefits as part of any land-use planning or management decision; it provides a systematic and transparent evaluation framework for all scales of decision making; integrates environmental, economic and social issues, and combines professional and local community views.

Revenue Costs: Costs associated with on-going management and maintenance of green infrastructure
Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP): A statutory responsibility introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Now subsumed within Local Transport Plans
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): Sites designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981), as amended, for their outstanding interest in respect of flora, fauna, geology and/or limnology
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): An assessment of potential impacts of policies and proposals on the environment and mitigation of impacts.

Stepping Stones: The Stepping Stones Project which ran from 1992 – 2014 which represented partnership working in the parishes surrounding Leicester that aimed to improve green space and make high quality Green Infrastructure available to all.

Swift Partnership Project: Partnership of local authority ecologists, Wildlife Trust, LROS, Severn Trent Water, Environment Agency aimed at conservation and awareness of Swifts in Leicestershire and Rutland
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Expands or supplements policy in development plan documents, for example design guidance, site development guidance, parking standards etc.

Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP): outlines the preferred surface water management strategy in a given location. Surface water flooding describes flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater, and runoff from land, small watercourses and ditches that occurs as a result of heavy rainfall.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): An appraisal of impacts of policies and proposals on economic, social and environmental issues; this can also cover the issues required by Strategic Environmental Assessment.
Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS): An approach to managing rainfall and run off in developments, with a view to replicating natural drainage; SUDS also aim to control pollution, re-charge ground water, control flooding, and often provide landscape and environmental enhancement

SUDS Approval Body (SAB): an organisation within County Councils and Unitary Authorities specifically established to deal with the design, approval and adoption of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) within any new development consisting of two or more properties. The SAB is required to approve the SUDS prior to construction commencing; it will produce tis own design guidance document and approval/adoption procedures. Statutory consultees of the SAB include Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, Canal & River Trust, Highway Authorities and Water Companies.

Wild Places: Sites identified on NatureSpot website as the best places to see wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland **https://www.naturespot.org.uk/wild_places**

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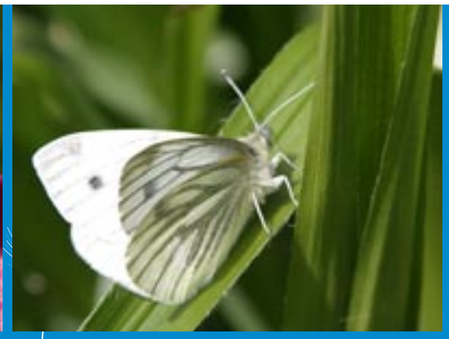

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https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2016/8/22/Guidelines_LWS.pdf

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Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

Appendix 1 – Local Wildlife sites

Site	Site Name	Area	Land-Use	Species and Habitats
2	Castle Hill - Gorse Hill	6.29	Managed open space - park Relic of rural landscape - ancient hedge	Species-rich neutral grasslands and species-rich hedgerow
3	King William's bridge	0.01	Relic of rural landscape – stone bridge (also a scheduled ancient	Lichen species assemblage
4	Red Hill and Belgrave Cemetery	11.11	Managed open space – allotments, cemetery	Species-rich neutral grasslands, scrub
			Post industrial - former railway	Pyramidal Orchids, badgers
5	River Soar and Grand Union Canal	52.03	Remnant natural system – River Soar	Aquatic habitats, marshland and species-rich neutral grassland, veteran trees (willows and poplars)
			Most is part of the Grand Union/River Soar navigation	Daubenton's bat roost, lichens, kingfisher, badger, little grebe
			Adjacent land within corridor has a variety of uses	
6	Watermead Country Park	40.67	Managed open space – LNR	Aquatic habitats and open water, neutral grasslands, willow carr and marshland, reedbed. Waterfowl.
			Remnant natural system – River	Crow Garlic and Golden Dock
			Post industrial – former gravel pits	
7	Birstall Meadows	15.05	Relic of rural landscape – grazing fields	Species-rich neutral grasslands and flood meadow
8	Melton Brook	3.84	Post-industrial and storm	Marshland and early successional habitats
9	Hamilton meadows	8.67	Relic of rural landscape -	Species-rich neutral grasslands
11	Quakesick Spinney	0.89	Relic of rural landscape - spinney	Lichens
12	Gypsy Lane Claypit SSSI	11.5	Post-industrial – former brick pit (includes a geological SSSI)	Early successional habitats; wetland
13	Anstey Lane and Goss Meadows	11.8	Relic of rural landscape – grassland, spinney, ancient hedge	Species-rich neutral grasslands, ponds, marshland, ancient hedgerow
			Managed open space - LNR	
14	The Orchards	5.97	Managed open space – LNR	Scrub woodland
15	Stokeswood Park	12.95	Managed open space - park	Species-rich neutral grasslands, scrub
16	Western Golf-course and adjacent sites	43.16	Managed open space – golf-	Ponds and spinneys, hedges
			Relic of rural landscape –	Great Crested Newts
17	Kirby Frith	1.88	Relic of rural landscape –	Species-rich neutral grassland
			Managed open space - LNR	Use by communities

19	Ratby Lane	2.69	Relic of rural landscape – ancient hedge	Hedgerow and spinney
20	Highway Spinney/Meynell's	7.89	Relic of rural landscape - spinney	Spinneys
21	Braunstone Park meadow	2.92	Relic of rural landscape – grassland	Species-rich neutral grassland
			Managed open space - park	Use by communities
22	Willowbrook	6.29	Managed open space – park	Species-rich neutral grassland, marshland, pond and brook. Last record for Water vole in Leicester
			Remnant natural system - stream	
23	Ethel Road verge	1.08	Managed open space - park	Species-rich calcareous and neutral
				Pyramidal and Bee Orchids
24	Evington Park pond	0.44	Managed open space - park	Pond with amphibian populations
25	Leicestershire golf-course,	76.8	Managed open space – golf-course, park, churchyard	Species-rich neutral grasslands, lichens, brook
	St Denys' churchyard,		Relic of rural landscape – ancient hedge, grassland	Adder's tongue fern, Badger
	Shady lane and Piggy's Hollow		Remnant natural system – Evington Brook	
			Also includes a scheduled ancient monument	
26	Ivanhoe/Mainline railway and adjacent sites	17.18	Active and disused railways and post industrial land, road verge.	Species-rich neutral and calcareous grasslands, scrub, early successional
			Part (Great Central Way) is now a cycle route	Blue Fleabane, Silvery Hair-grass, Kidney Vetch, Heather, Common Cudweed, Dropwort, Purging Flax, Small toadflax,
				Great Central Way used by communities
27	Welford Rd. Cemetery	12.39	Managed open space - cemetery	Species-rich neutral grasslands and veteran trees
28	Grand Union canal	16.92	Managed open space - canal	Aquatic habitat and open water
				Grass-wrack pondweed and White-clawed
29	Aylestone Meadows (N)	60.19	Relic of rural landscape – grazing fields	Species-rich neutral grasslands, small river and aquatic habitats, ponds,
			Managed open space – LNR	Badger, Kingfisher, Reed Bunting
			Remnant natural system – River Biam	Use by communities
30	Aylestone Meadows (C)	46.62	Relic of rural landscape – grazing fields	Species-rich neutral grasslands, small river and aquatic habitats, ponds,
			Managed open space – LNR	Badger, Kingfisher, Reed bunting, Marsh Arrow-grass, Meadow Saxifrage, Lesser Spearwort, Meadow-rue, Tubular water-dropwort, Round-fruited rush
			Also with Packhorse Bridge scheduled ancient monument	

31	Aylestone Meadows (S)	3.55	Relic of rural landscape – grazing fields	Species-rich neutral grasslands, small river and aquatic habitats, ponds, veteran trees
32	Knighton Spinney	2.89	Relic of rural landscape – spinney	Spinney
			Managed open space - LNR	
33	Braunstone Park: mature trees	32.44	Relic of rural landscape – veteran trees	Veteran trees
			Managed open space – parkland	
34	Ashton Green	10.46	Rural landscape with relic grassland, established mature hedgerows, field ponds and veteran trees	Species-rich neutral grasslands, ponds, veteran trees, hedgerows
36	Saffron Lane Brook	0.08	Remnant natural system	Stream with natural meanders, pools, riffles and sand bars
39	Wash Brook Nature Reserve	3.6	Relic rural landscape and brownfield site	Species-rich neutral grassland, small brook, pond, scrub
42	Appleton Park and Peebles Way Nature Reserve	1.7	Relic rural landscape and brownfield site	Species-rich neutral grassland, woodland pond, scrub
43	Sonning Way Open Space Hedgerow		Relic rural landscape - mature hedgerow	Hedgerow, veteran trees
45	Evington Park Field Ponds	0.22	Managed open space - park	Ponds
46	King's Lock Fields, Aylestone		Relic rural landscape	Species-rich neutral grassland
48	Knighton (Attenborough) Arboretum Pond	0.13	Managed open space	Pond
49	Anstey Lane Hedgerow	590m	Relic rural landscape - mature hedgerow	Hedgerow, veteran trees
50	Sturdee Road Hedgerow	360m	Relic rural landscape - mature hedgerow	Hedgerow, veteran trees
51	Hinckley Road Hedgerow	298m	Relic rural landscape - mature hedgerow	Hedgerow, veteran trees
52	Western Park Hedgerow and Pond	0.02	Relic rural landscape - mature hedgerow	Hedgerow, field pond
53	Knighton Park Hedgerows	190m	Relic rural landscape - mature hedgerow	Hedgerow, veteran trees
54	Waterside Centre, Anstey Lane	0.56	Covered reservoir	Species-rich neutral grassland

Partners logos
TO GO HERE

Partners logos
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Leicestershire & Rutland Mammal Group

Environment Agency

River Soar Catchment Partnership

Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water

Aylestone Meadows Appreciation Society

University of Leicester

Leicestershire & Rutland Badger Group

Knighton Wild

The Wildlife Trusts
Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust

Leicester City Council

Sustainable Schools Leicester

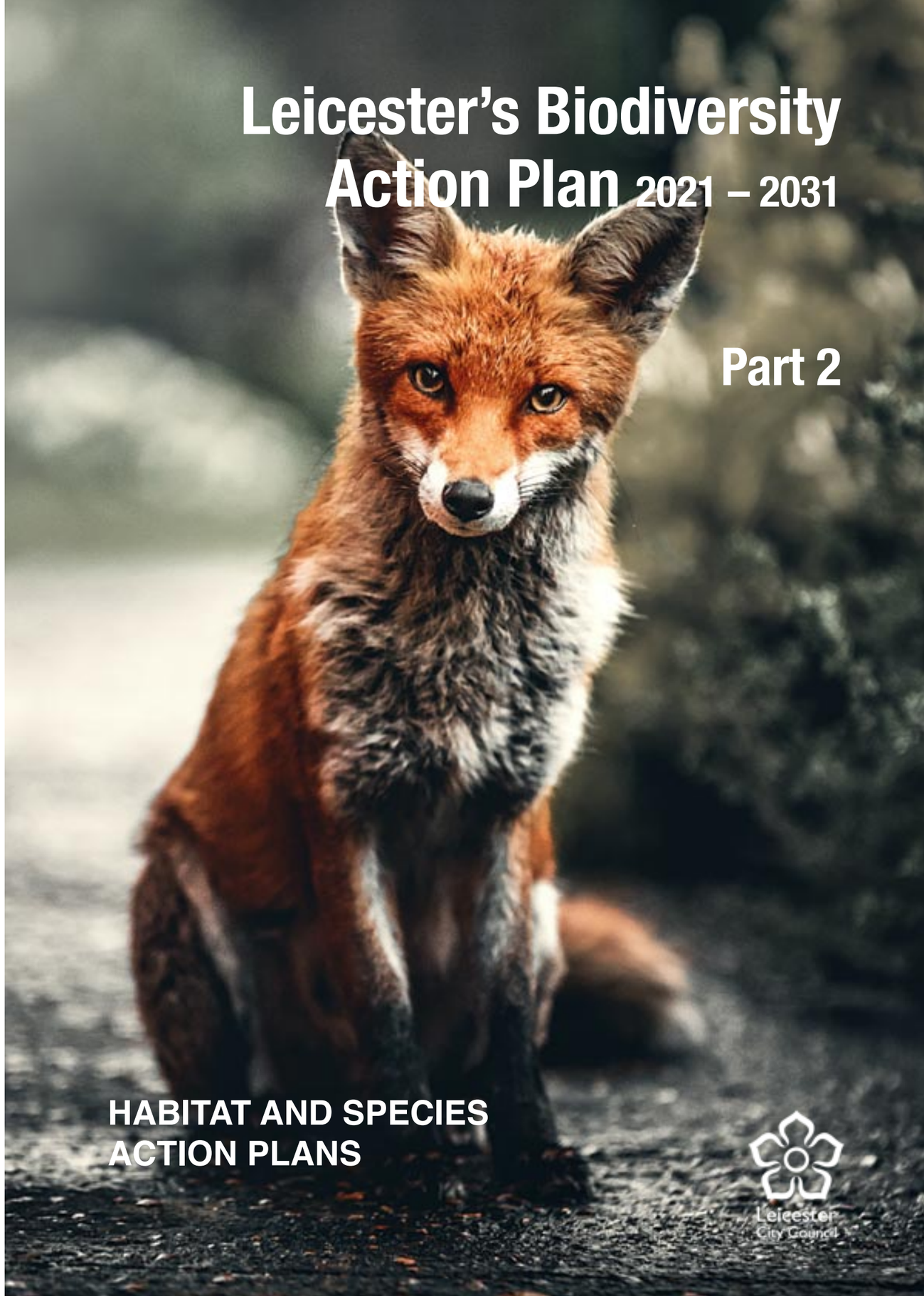
Making Wildlife Count

TCV The Conservation Volunteers

LRERC Leicestershire & Rutland environmental records cent

other logos corrupted

NatureSpot
Recording the Wildlife of Leicestershire & Rutland



Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 – 2031

Part 2

HABITAT AND SPECIES ACTION PLANS

Leicester City Council

Contents

Introduction

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

1. Introduction to Plans

1.1 THE VISION

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 conserve areas across Leicester.

This set of Habitat and Species Action Plans (HAPs and SAPs) have been agreed in consultation and discussion with stakeholders and partners involved in nature conservation in the city. The Plans are set out for a 5-year programme and will be reviewed against what has been achieved during that time and to enable agreement on future actions with partners.

Part 2 of the Plan should be cross-referenced with Part 1, but it is worth re-emphasising that whilst Leicester is a biodiverse city located ecologically in the middle of the country and well-placed for ecological restoration, it is also mindful of the continuing decline of many habitats and species of conservation (and human) importance. Demands for species to exist (and provide benefits to humans) within the city are high and the required ecological enhancements to ensure their continuation (and the continuation of the benefits given to humans) requires space for breeding, nesting, feeding and growing.

The principles set out in the 25-year Environment Plan are:

Thriving plants and animals – to be achieved by:

- Restoration to favourable status of 75% of protected sites
- Creation and restoration of wildlife-rich habitats
- Pro-active species recovery of threatened plants, animals and fungi
- Increase woodland cover

Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently

- Introduce tools and guidance that support biodiversity net gain approaches
- Review standards for Green Infrastructure and include wider natural capital benefits e.g. flood protection, water and air quality) to compliment biodiversity enhancements
- Support community forests through restoration and enhancement of existing woodland and urban tree planting schemes, appointing Tree Champions

Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

- Create a Nature Recovery Network to include wildflower-rich meadows and woodland
- Provide better access for people alongside improved habitat for pollinating insects
- Connect people with the environment to improve health and well-being

These over-arching principles have been taken into consideration in helping to formulate the actions and targets set out in the Habitat and Species Action Plans.

Each Plan is divided into a number of sections that provide an introduction to the habitat type or species, together with why they are threatened or in decline and their current status and distribution in Leicester. The Plans each contain specific actions on Management/Advice, Research/Monitoring, and Engagement to help achieve the aims and objectives of the BAP and contribute to the policies set out in the Environment Plan.

The Plans should not be read in isolation, for example the Habitat Plan for Watercourses (Rivers and Brooks) should also reference Species Plans for Amphibians and Reptiles, Water vole and Otter. Each plan is cross-referenced where this applies. Planning, Policy and Legislation is applicable to all Actions Plans and is referred to separately in Section 5 of Part 1 with specific opportunities and/or legislation referenced where appropriate. Similarly, Biosecurity and Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) have a separate Action Plan as these species of

plants and animals are likely to impact on the conservation status of all priority habitats and species.

1.2 LEICESTER BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN AIMS

To conserve and enhance a range of habitats and associated species that characterise the city of Leicester, contributing to the regional and national biodiversity whilst providing an attractive and sustainable natural environment in which to live, work, learn and enjoy.

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- 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

1.3 LEICESTER BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

The council will work in partnership with others wherever possible to achieve the following:

- Oversee the production and implementation of the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan
- Strengthen and improve the duty of the local authority to make sure it carries out its function to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Identify and map the current green network of priority sites and identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement that will contribute to an overall Nature Recovery Network
- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Seek out ways to commit landowners to a binding agreement to secure the long-term sustainability where wildlife-rich sites have been created or restored
- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level
- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Biosecurity and Invasive Non-native species

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

2. Biosecurity and Invasive Non-native species

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are defined as non-native species (i.e. those species that do not occur naturally within the UK before people first arrived) and are considered to be one of the largest threats to biodiversity at a globalscale.

They include species that have been transported outside of their natural range and that can significantly damage our environment, services, economy, health and life-style. They threaten the survival of rare native plants and animals as well as damaging sensitive ecosystems and habitats.

Biosecurity literally means 'safe life' and refers to taking action to minimise the risk or prevent the movement or transmission of invasive non-native species and diseases.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This generic plan focuses solely on "invasive" non-native species and not simply non-natives. It covers both terrestrial and freshwater species found in Leicester/Leicestershire or deemed likely to colonise the city and/or county.

Biosecurity issues are considered in relation to the potential introduction and spread of a priority list of INNS, diseases and parasites.

The Convention on Biological Diversity considers the combined effect of climate change and invasive species to be the main driver of biodiversity loss across the planet. INNS are the greatest threat to biodiversity being capable of colonising a wide range of habitats and excluding native flora and fauna. In the last 400 years INNS have contributed to 40% of animal extinctions.

Examples of freshwater INNS found in Leicester and their ability to adapt, survive and disperse from one site to another are:

- Killer shrimp *(Dikerogammarus villosus)* survives for 48 hours in dry conditions and 15 days in damp conditions;
- Floating pennywort *(Hydrocotyle ranunculoides)* can reproduce from a tiny fragment and grow up to 20cm/day;
- Japanese knotweed *(Fallopia japonica)* can reproduce and spread from a piece of root/rhizome only 0.6 grams;
- A single plant of Himalayan balsam *(Impatiens glandulifera)* produces up to 800 seeds;
- The crayfish plague *(Aphanomyces astaci)* is a fungus which can survive between 6-22 days without a host under damp conditions.

Costs of mitigation, control and eradication of INNS and diseases are high. There are currently hundreds of INNS established in the UK with new non-native species arriving each year and the issue is known to be intensifying. The threat of INNS on freshwater and terrestrial habitats is exacerbated by climate change which improves the establishment conditions, pollution and habitat disturbance with a correspondingly greater socio-economic, health and ecological cost.

The need to have a co-ordinated and pro-active approach in tackling INNS at a local level with BAP partners and other environmental organisations across the Midlands is a necessity. This plan sets out to establish the need to prevent the introduction of INNS before they become established where ever possible and how to deal with those already present.

2.2 GLOBAL AND NATIONAL ACTION

The issues associated with INNS were re-addressed and prioritised at The Convention on Biological Diversity (2010). Aitchi target No.9 specifically addressed this issue (Note, the term alien is used inter-actively with invasive nonnative).

Target 9

By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

Defra first reviewed their policy on non-native species in 2001 and published a report in 2003. This was further updated in 2008 with the publication of "The Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy" which has been subsequently reviewed and updated in 2015 "The Great Britain Invasive Non-native Species Strategy" which is the current national advice on the programme of work being undertaken centrally and practical measures on how to tackle INNS.

The government has also specifically referred to biosecurity in their 25-year Environment Plan with a priority which states:
We will enhance biosecurity to protect our wildlife and livestock, and boost the resilience of plants and trees. We will do this by:

- managing and reducing the impact of existing plant and animal diseases; lowering the risk of new ones and tackling invasive non-native species
- reaching the detailed goals to be set out in the Tree Health Resilience Plan of 2018
- ensuring strong biosecurity protection at our borders, drawing on the opportunities leaving the EU provides
- working with industry to reduce the impact of endemic disease

The EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation came into force in 2015. It balances prevention, early warning and rapid response, and long-term control measures, with an emphasis on prevention as the most cost effective and efficient approach. This regulation added considerably to pre-existing domestic legislation, and was considered essential by environmentalists to combat the threat of INNS. Defra converted this regulation into domestic law (in preparation for the UK leaving the EU) via a Statutory Instrument ('Draft Invasive Non-native Species (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019') and it became law in January 2019.

2.3 CURRENT STATUS

The current status of individual INNS in Leicester is not well understood as these species are generally only recorded at a site level for management purposes or when surveys are undertaken for development of a particular site and establish a method of eradication where necessary.

Some records are available locally from the Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre (LRERC) and National Biodiversity Network (NBN) but these are likely to be under-recorded and considerably under-estimate species in terms of frequency and distribution.

Those species most relevant to Leicester and Leicestershire and which are likely to have the most impacts are listed below.

Table 2.1: Freshwater and Terrestrial INNS recorded or likely to be present in Leicester and Leicester

Freshwater INNS		Terrestrial INNS	
Common Name	**Scientific Name**	**Common Name**	**Scientific Name**
Fauna		**Fauna**	
American mink	*Neovison vison*	Asian hornet	Vespa velutina nigrithorax
Bloody-red mysid	*Hemimysis anomala*	Canada goose	Branta canadensis
Killer shrimp	*Dikerrogammarus vilosus*	Grey squirrel	Sciurus carolinensis
Red-eared terrapin	*Trachemys scripta*	Muntjac deer	Muntiacus reevesii
Ruddy duck	*Oxyura jamaicensis*		
Signal crayfish	*Pacifastacus leniusculus*		
Zebra mussel	*Dreissena polymorpha*		
Flora		**Flora**	
Canadian pondweed	*Elodea canadensis*	Cotoneaster	Cotoneaster
Floating pennywort	*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*	Giant hogweed	Heracleum mantegazzianum
New Zealand Pigmyweed	*Crassula helmsii*	Indian balsam	Impatiens glandulifera
Nuttall's waterweed	*Elodea nuttallii*	Japanese knotweed	Fallopia japonica
Parrot's feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*		
Water fern	*Azolla filiculoides*		
Water hyacinth	*Eichhornia crassipes*		

Need charts

2.4 THREATS

The main impacts on biodiversity are as follows:

Habitat Quality

- Reduced habitat quality and diversity created by establishment of monocultures of the INNS that out-shade and out-compete native and less vigorous plants e.g. Japanese knotweed, Indian balsam
- Oxygen starvation of invertebrates and fish in watercourses where invasive plants shade-out and use up oxygen e.g. Floating pennywort;

Disease

- Spread of disease through pathogens e.g. loss of White-clawed crayfish due to spread of crayfish plague by American signal crayfish;

Competition

- Loss of native species due to completion for food, habitat etc e.g. Harlequin ladybird

Predation

- Direct population reduction due to killing target species e.g. American mink impact on Water vole populations

2.5 BIOSECURITY AND INNS ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Enhance biodiversity value through habitat restoration and species recovery where impacted by INNS	Ensure appropriate measures taken to eradicate INNS from development sites through mitigation plans in	On-going	Planning, EA, C&RT, STW
	Use S215 T&CP Act to enforce effective control of land to control	On-going	Planning
	Minimise use of invasive and non-native species in terrestrial and	2025	Planning, EA, C&RT, STW
Produce Plan on Biosecurity and INNS	Use advice from central government, statutory authorities and BAP partners to produce plan to advise locally and	2021	Flood, Nat Con
Update Management Plans and key strategies to include sections on INNS to inform on appropriate actions and management where	Overall Plan to advise on inclusion. Service area to be agreed to oversee this task and ensure implementation as updated plans come forward –	On-going	Sustainability
Consider active control of INNS fauna if required to safeguard native	Agreement to be sought from BAP partners and methods prior to any	On-going	Nat Con
Collate records on INNS in Leicester and evaluate	Collate data from all partners associated with freshwater sites	2021	Flood
	Collate data from partners on terrestrial sites – i.e. Japanese	2021/2022	T&W
	Identify and prioritise locations where	2023	Nat Con, Flood,
Monitor and evaluate spread of INNS	Monitor extent and spread of invasive	On-going	EA
Promote positive management that will enhance biodiversity value and control INNS	Promote good practice and case studies on LCC and partner websites; promote existing information on INNS	2022-2025	EA, Parks, Nat Con
	Promote regularly with national/local	On-going	EA, Parks, Nat
Organise events with partners to target “hotspots” where INNS present	Organise 2 x events annually with BAP partners aimed at eradication of INNS on part of water course or ponds	2022 onwards	EA, Parks
	Organise 2 Green Lifeboat sessions per year with partners and volunteers aimed at eradication of INNS on	On-going from 2022	Parks, EA

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Collate records on INNS in Leicester and evaluate	Collate data from all partners associated with freshwater sites (LRERC, EA, STW, C&RT, Flood, Parks – LEV)	2020	Flood
	Collate data from partners on terrestrial sites – i.e. Japanese knotweed (T&W, Parks, Nat Con), Mink (Nat Con)	2020/2021	T&W
	Identify and prioritise locations where control of species is required	2021	Nat Con, Flood, T&W, Parks
Monitor and evaluate spread of INNS and impacts of control mechanisms	Monitor extent and spread of invasive freshwater plants and animals	On-going	EA

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Promote positive management that will enhance biodiversity value and control INNS	Promote good practice and case studies on LCC and partner websites ; promote existing information on INNS and management and update where required	2022-2025	EA, Parks, Nat Con
	Promote regularly with national/local campaigns and promote through media	On-going	EA, Parks, Nat Con
Organise events with partners to target "hotspots" where INNS present	Organise 2 x events annually with BAP partners aimed at eradication of INNS on part of water course or ponds – review re Covid	2021	EA, Parks
	Organise XX Green Lifeboat sessions with partners and volunteers aimed at eradication of INNS on watercourses	On-going from 2021	Parks, EA

Need charts

Habitat Action Plans

3. Habitat Action Plans

The plans are divided into the main habitat groups found in Leicester considered Priority and/or Protected Habitats. An Urban category is included as these sites are likely to support a range of species associated with the mosaic of conditions at each site. Generally the categories are:

- Trees - Woodland, Hedgerows and Mature/Veteran trees
- Water - Rivers and brooks; Ponds, canals and lakes
- Grassland – neutral and floodplain grassland meadows
- Urban – Allotments, Urban Parks, Roadside verges

The list of urban habitats is not exhaustive and sites such as cemeteries and churchyards, gardens and school grounds as well as post-industrial brownfield sites are all likely to support biodiversity and in some case rare species of flora and fauna. Whilst open to review, these habitat types are well documented in other Plans such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy, Pollinator Strategy and a broad range of publications by conservation organisations.

Many of the objectives and actions set out within the Habitat and Species Action Plans will also be relevant for these types of sites. So, where school grounds contain woodlands or ponds it will be possible to refer to those Plans for guidance. Likewise some of the larger cemeteries and churchyards can refer to the neutral grassland and mature tree plans for information and actions. Those considered of high biodiversity value are already designated as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) with their own specific management plans to optimise their biodiversity value and contribute to the Nature Recovery Network.

Naturally vegetated areas such as scrub which may be common and widespread within an urban context are not identified as priority habitats or within HAPs, but should nevertheless not go unrecognised. Whilst limiting opportunities for anti-social behaviour and keeping sites safe with open with clear routes, sites that contain areas of scrub and tall herbs are especially important for supporting species such as pollinating insects, nesting birds, small mammals and reptiles. Across the city, these sites occur frequently and provide a mechanism of dispersal that fits into the wider green network. They should be considered in relation to the species and the significant biodiversity they support in a local context. Even small or low distinctive habitat patches may be important if they are able to be part of a wider Nature Recovery Network or are in a desirable location that will remain undisturbed.

Allotments

1.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

Allotment means land being allotted to an individual under an enclosure award and is defined as a portion of a field assigned to a cottager to labour for themselves, or a piece of ground let out for spare time cultivation under a public scheme.

Some urban allotments originated from the traditions of the Pleasure Garden or Guinea Garden – to grow things for pleasure and beauty such as flower gardens, whilst others were set aside to grow fruit and vegetables for the urban poor.

Allotments are widespread throughout Leicester and some cover relatively large areas such as Queens Road, RowleyFields and Redhill allotments. Currently there are 43 allotment sites across Leicester offering 3200 cultivated plots.

33 city allotments are managed by local allotment societies and the remainder are managed by the City Council and leased directly to users.

1.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Allotments have been found to have approximately 30% higher species diversity than urban parks as a result of the range of habitats found within them. These include hedgerows, ditches, grassy banks, compost heaps and ponds. Seed and fruit sources of tended plots and scrubby cover of un-tended plots help to complete the diversity.

Species associated with this environment include invertebrates such as bumblebees, butterflies and other pollinating insects. Birds such as sparrows, thrushes, finches, tits and robins nest in the hedgerows and scrub. Foxes and badgers will build dens/setts under huts and sheds whilst mice and field voles will nest in undisturbed margins. Ponds and ditches provide breeding grounds for frogs, toads and newts; and field margins and brick/wood piles create ideal over-wintering habitat.

Associated Habitat Action Plans
Grassland
Woodland

Associated Species Action Plans
Insects/Pollinators
Birds

1.3 THREATS

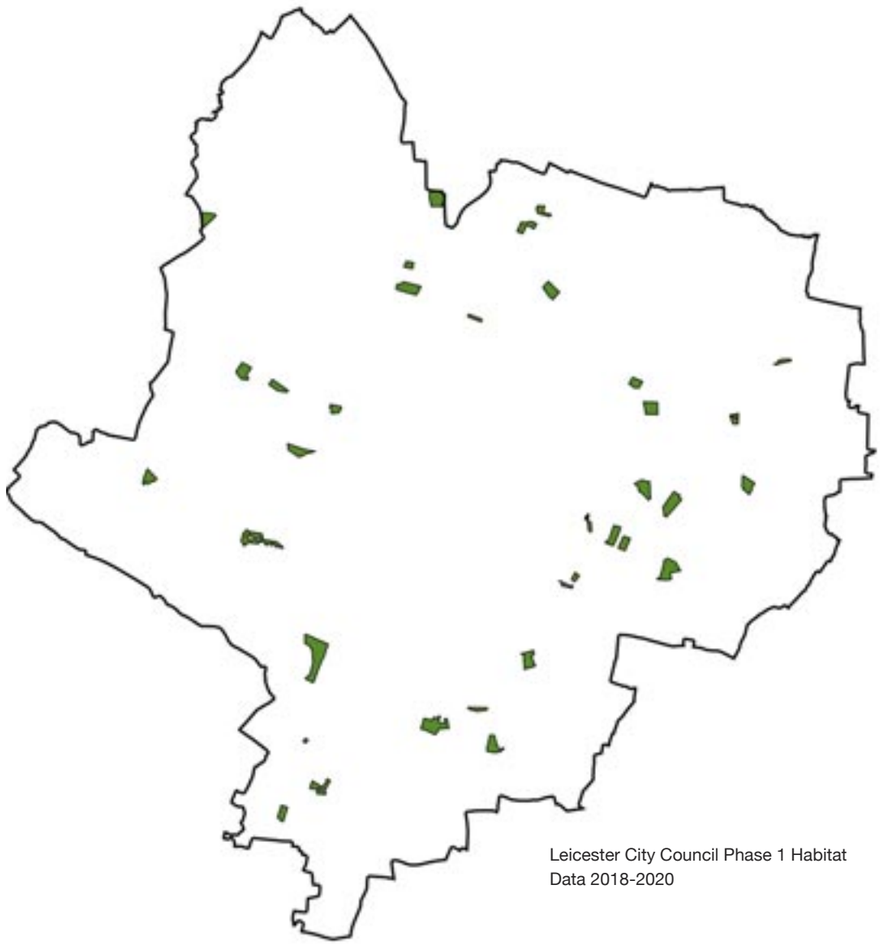
Main factors affecting allotments in Leicester are:

- Previous de-commissioning of allotments that are largely un-managed and identified for potential development.
- Use of pesticides and inorganic fertilisers affecting plants and reducing invertebrate and amphibian populations.
- Lease and tenancy agreements may impose certain restrictions on use, cultivation, crop type and structures erected;
- Planting of non-native plants can inhibit the development of allotments as a resource for species conservation
- Over-management and disturbance of plots that decrease the value to wildlife.
- Management of boundaries and communal areas;
- Fluctuating demand – over-subscribed in some areas and under-subscribed in others

1.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

Links to websites containing guidance on Wildlife on allotments
http://www.wlgf.org/ne20wildlife_on_allotments[1].pdf; http://www.rspb.org.uk/hfw/advice/12/

1.5 DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOTMENTS



Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Data 2018-2020

1.6 ALLOTMENTS ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Enhance biodiversity value through habitat restoration and species recovery where impacted by INNS	Create and maintain ponds on at least **50%** of allotment sites	2025	Nat Con, Froglife
	Create edible hedgerows on at least **25%** of allotment sites	2025	Nat Con, LEV
	Create green roofs on at least **25%** sheds, storage areas	2025	Nat Con, LRWT
Objective	**Actions**	**Achieved by**	**Lead**
Management/Advice			
Review Allotment Strategy re use of herbicides and pesticides	Update Plan if required to reduce use and encourage organic production	2022	Stds & Development
Provide advice to allotment holders and others on wildlife legislation	Focus on sites where protected species may be impacted	2022	LCC Nat Con
Objective	**Actions**	**Achieved by**	**Lead**
Monitoring/Research			
Work with Naturespot to publicise their website and process of recording	Encourage allotment societies to regularly record wildlife using NaturesSot and/or other apps and to	2021	Nat Con, NatureSpot
Arrange 2 x recording events with Naturespot and allotment holders	Arrange **2 x recording events** with Naturespot and allotment holders	2025	Nat Con, NatureSpot
Create at least 2 Allotment Wild Places on Naturespot to encourage	Create at least **2 Allotment Wild Places** on Naturespot to encourage recording	2025	Nat Con, NatureSpot
Identify potential research projects re habitat value of allotments and food production	Identify at least one long-term study which uses Leicester allotments as focus of study	2025	University
Objective	**Actions**	**Achieved by**	**Lead**
Engagement			
Provide information packs to societies and individuals promoting good practice and case-studies	Produce a leaflet on how to encourage wildlife on allotments	2022	TCV
Promote positive management that will enhance biodiversity value of allotments	Identify **2 x exemplar allotment sites** to host an biennial event at each to promote good practice for wildlife	2022-2025	TCV

Broad-leaved and Wet Woodland

55

2.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

Broadleaf woodland is defined as those woodlands containing no more than 10% coniferous trees. It is a particularly scarce habitat with only ~ 80 ha of public and privately owned woodland located in Leicester. Most woodland is recent plantation or relics of former farmland or parkland which have been planted for timber, shelter or fox coverts. All plantations are important for birds, mammals and invertebrates as well as having value as a landscape feature.

Only one of Leicester's woodlands (Meynell's Gorse) may be truly ancient in origin (i.e. has been in existence since at least 1600). There are a number of small but mature woodlands and spinneys such as Highway Spinney, Knighton Spinney, Kingsway spinney and Her Ladyship's Covert distributed across Leicester that provide important stepping stones for wildlife. Areas of wet woodland are also located adjacent to the River Soar on land designated as LNRs at Aylestone and Watermead.

Leicester's trees are facing unprecedented threats to the city tree stock from a range of pests and diseases that have entered the country and been dspersed through the importing of contaminated nursery stock as well as wind-blow from Europe and Africa.

Additional pressures from climate change are likely exacerbate levels of pest and disease activity as well as demands to plant more trees to sequester carbon and provide mitigation. Managing our existing woodlands to optimise the many associated benefits as they mature is paramount as well as ensuring any new woodlands are located in the right place (avoiding other habitats of value) with a secure maintenance programme attached.

2.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Woodlands in Leicester are characterised by Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* and Field maple *(Acer campestre)* on heavy clay soils and Pedunculate oak *(Quercus robur)*, Hazel *(Corylus avellana)* and brambles *(Rubus sp)* on more acid soils. They contain a diverse range of plant communities including Bluebells *(Hyacinthoides non-scripta)*, Wood anemone *(Anenome nemorosa)* and Wood sorrel *(Oxalis acetosella)* found on lighter soils.

The Local Wildlife Site woodland criteria are based on its classification as ancient woodland, with at least 4 woodland indicator species or is colonised by willow/alder or bluebells. To meet some of the criteria the sites have to be 0.25 to over 2 ha. Nevertheless, broad-leaved woodland is increasingly recognised as important in a local context and therefore considered a priority habitat irrespective of its age.

Associated Species Action Plans

Amphibians/Reptiles Bats Birds Insects/Pollinators

2.3 THREATS

Main factors affecting broadleaf woodland in Leicester are:

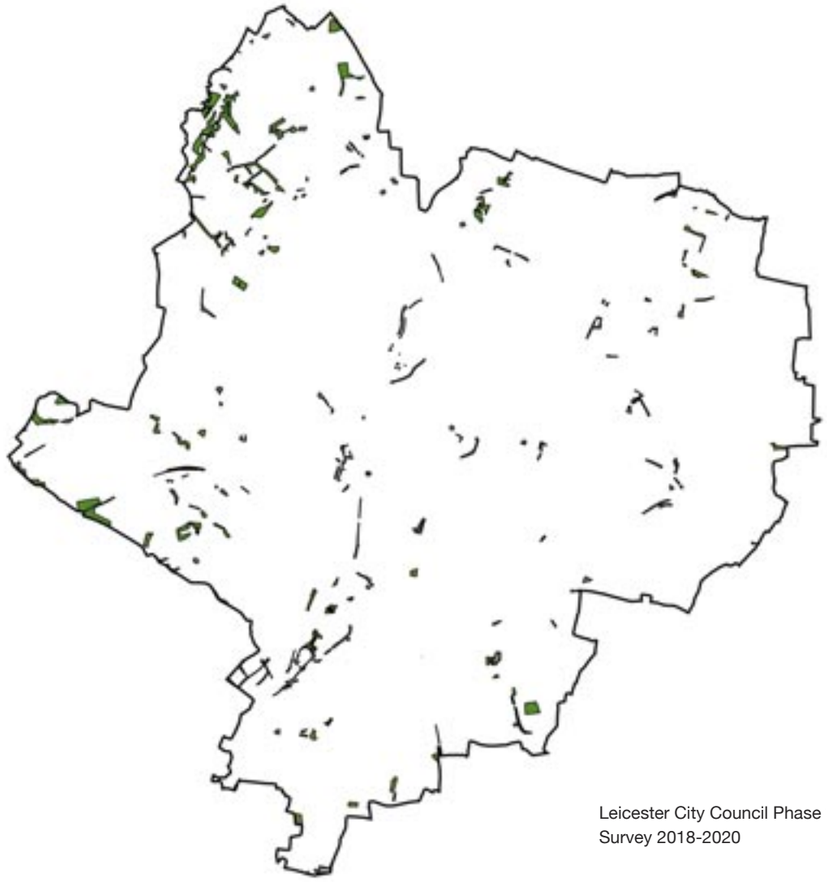
- Habitat loss due to development sited too close to woodland impacting on RPZs;
- Anti-social behaviour - fly-tipping and garden waste from adjacent properties into woodland;
- Diseases such as Dutch elm disease, Horse chestnut bleeding canker, although pathogens affecting Alder, Oak and Ash die-back are currently low;
- People pressure - off-road cycling, informal and desire-line footpaths, vandalism (graffiti, paint, arson), cutting for wood-burning stoves;
- Works to mature trees next to paths or clearance of under-storey for health and safety;
- Atmospheric nutrient input

2.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Phase 1 Habitat Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites designated as woodland

http://citystreatz2.leicester.gov.uk/citystreatz/frame.npx?site=citystreatz_internet&lang=en&group=public&resol=2&tabs=11100

2.5 DISTRIBUTION OF BROAD-LEAVED WOODLANDS



Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2018-2020

2.6 BROAD-LEAVED AND WET WOODLAND ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance woodland habitat across Leicester to create larger and better connected habitat	Increase woodland area by 10% at a range of sites across Leicester	2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con
	Plant edible orchards at 25% with minimum of 10 trees wherever possible 5% schools annually)	2020-2025	Sustainability
	Restore woodland habitat to improving or favourable status and secure on-going maintenance programme at 50% of existing woodland (10% annually)	2020 - 2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2020 - 2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance woodland habitat across Leicester to create larger and better connected habitat	Increase woodland area by 5% at a range of sites across Leicester	2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con
	Plant edible orchards at 25% with minimum of 10 trees wherever possible 5% schools	2021 - 2025	Sustainability
	Restore woodland habitat to improving or favourable status and secure on-going maintenance programme at 50% of existing woodland (5% annually)	**2021 - 2030**	**Parks, T&W, Nat Con**
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2020 - 2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Set up Woodland Group to identify sites for planting new and managing existing woodlands that can also help alleviate impacts of climate change	Complete Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping and agree on sites for new woodland – consider wider benefits of flood prevention to create areas of wet woodland	2021	Parks, Nat Con
Set up a Group to agree on how to manage woodlands affected by Ash die-back and other pathogens impacting on native tree-	Agree an Action Plan on how the council will conserve native woodlands wherever possible and manage them effectively	2022	T&W, Parks, Nat Con
Ensure priority sites have a Management Plan that contributes towards achieving favourable status and is regularly reviewed	Update Management Plans for Knighton Spinney and Highway Spinney	2021	Nat Con, T&W
Ensure priority sites have a Management Plan that contributes towards achieving favourable status and is regularly reviewed	Update Management Plans on all designated sites containing significant woodland	2025	Nat Con, T&W
Promote positive management with landowners of designated sites and where possible offer incentives and funding opportunities	Carry out pro-active management on council sites annually – ensure species of local provenance planted, control knotweed and other non-native species	2021 - on-going	Parks, T&W
Provide information to publicise good management practice	Collate central database of projects and/or case studies to demonstrate good practice - share with partners and publicise on website	2021-2025	Nat Con, Parks

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Identify sites that meet LWS criteria and agree designation where appropriate	Monitor and review 25% annually existing woodland sites and designate where	2021-2025	Nat Con
Establish base-line of woodland habitat and condition	Review Phase 1 data of woodlands and update database and digitised maps	2021/22	Nat Con

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Provide formal/informal training in techniques to land managers, site wardens,	Review training needs with Council Services and organise 1-2 training event	2021	Nat Con, T&W, TCV
	Continue to support existing FoGs and PuGs in woodland management programme and	On-going	Parks

3.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

A hedgerow habitat generally resembles woodland edge and scrub in a linear form. They are a particularly important feature due to the relatively low percentage of woodland cover in the city, but also because they help to connect one habitat with another. This makes them valuable to mobile species such as bats, birds and insects which use the hedgerows to forage and commute and so act as a corridor for wildlife dispersal.

Older and more mature hedgerows can also be features in an historic landscape, often denoting the boundary between parishes or landowners. In Leicester most of the hedgerows were planted after the Enclosures Act in the 18th/19th centuries to divide and enclose former common land.

Hedgerows at Anstey Lane, Gorse Hill, Stokes Drive, Ratby Lane and Gartree Road may be “ancient” relics from past agricultural use and show signs of having been previously laid, or have associated features such as banks, ditches and mature trees at regular intervals along its length. The heritage and biodiversity value of such hedgerows affords them protection from being removed under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997).

Some hedgerows meet the LWS criteria and have been designated because they have up to six or more locally native trees and shrubs per 30 m section on average or 5 species plus additional features of biodiversity value.

3.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Typical Midlands hedgerows contain common hawthorn *(Crataegus monogyna)* and sometimes Midland hawthorn ***(Crataegus laevigata)***. Older hedgerows contain species such as Field maple *(Acer campestre)*, Dogwood *(Cornus sanguineus)*, Buckthorn *(Rhamnus cathrticus)* and Spindle *(Enonymus europaeus)*. Mature trees such as Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* and Oak *(Quercus robur)* are traditionally planted at intervals to define the boundary and add to the diversity and habitat value.

Typical bird species associated with hedgerows are those that like dense cover such as Blackbird ***(Turdus merula)***, Song thrush *(Turdus philomelos)*, Bullfinch *(Pyrrhula pyrrhula)* and Wren *(Troglodytes troglodytes)*. Hedgerows provide valuable habitat shelter for invertebrates, birds and small mammals and nesting sites for birds whilst bats will use hedges to navigate and migrate between roosts and foraging site.

Associated Habitat Action Plans
Woodland
Mature/Veteran Trees

Associated Species Action Plans
Bats
Birds
Hedgehogs
Amphibians/Reptiles

3.3 THREATS

Main factors affecting hedgerows in Leicester are:

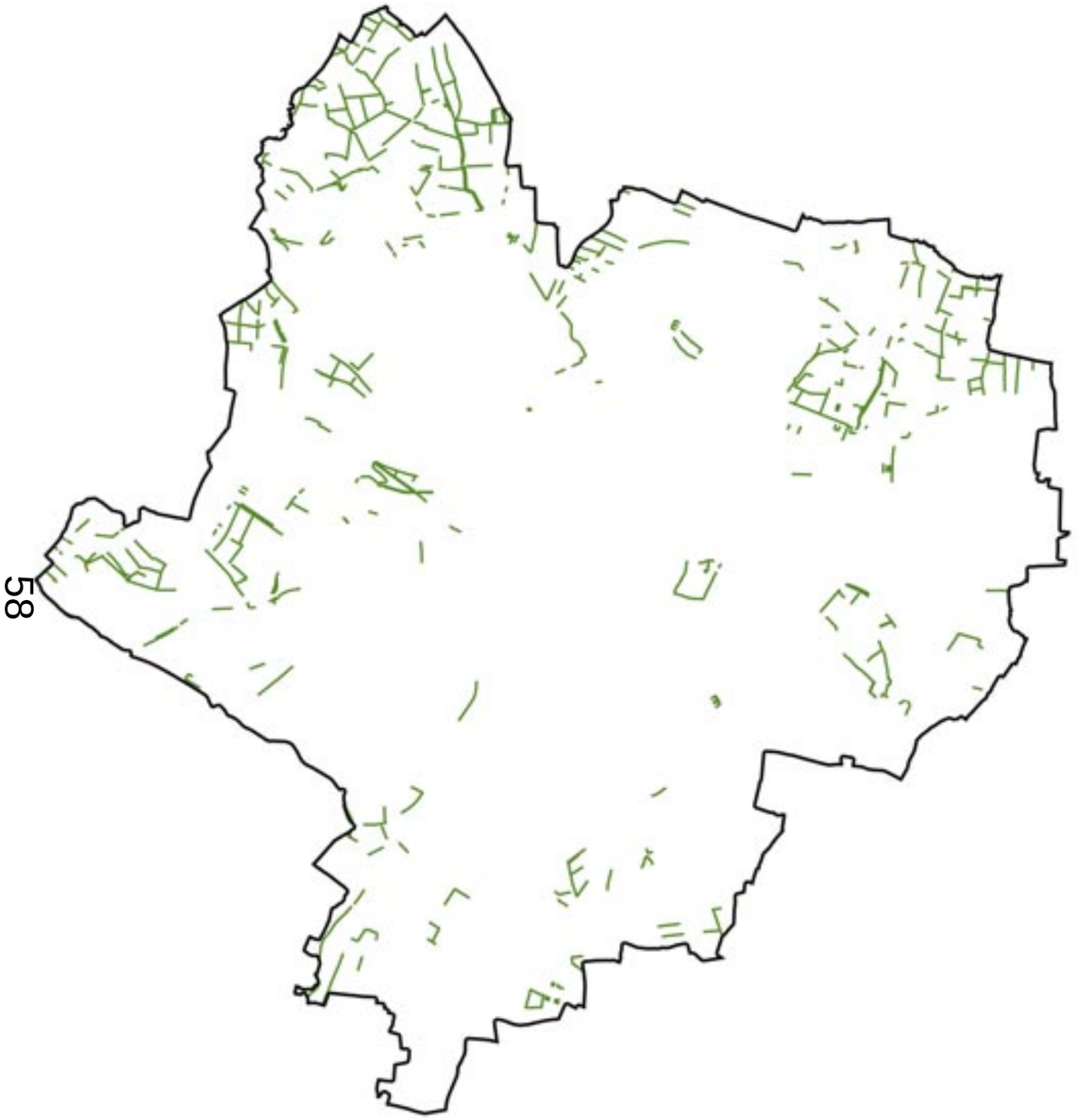
- Removal of hedgerows for urban/suburban development.
- Inappropriate or ad-hoc management when retained within a development.
- Lack of management over an extensive period of time (i.e. over a 20-30 year period).
- Over-management – especially hard annual flailing which can damage trees and replacement saplings;
- People use – short-cuts through hedgerows, crown-lifting for better surveillance and damage to structure
- Application of herbicides and pesticides along base of hedgerows
- Damage and general vandalism to newly-planted hedgerows at most vulnerable growth

3.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Links to websites containing guidance on management of hedgerows

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69285/pb11951-hedgerow-surveyhandbook-070314.pdf

3.5 DISTRIBUTION OF HEDGEROWS



Source: Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2018-20

3.6 HEDGEROW ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance hedgerow habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat	Plant 10 km of new hedgerows at sites across Leicester (public and private land)	2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con
	Plant edible orchards at 25% with minimum of 10 trees wherever possible 5% schools	2021 - 2026	Sustainability
	Restore hedgerow habitat to improving or favourable status and secure on-going maintenance programme at 50% of existing hedgerows (5% annually)	**2021 - 2030**	**Parks, T&W, Nat Con**
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2021 - 2030	Parks, T&W, Nat Con

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Set up Woodland Group to identify sites for planting new and managing existing hedgerows that can also help alleviate impacts of climate change	Complete Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping and agree on sites for new woodland – consider wider benefits of flood prevention to create areas of wet woodland	2021	Parks, Nat Con
Provide specific management advice on hedgerows	Produce Information pack for planners, land managers and householders and publicise widely using digital media. Review as	2021	Nat Con
	Remove deer and rabbit tubes from 10% mature hedgerows annually when no longer	2021-2026	Parks (Tree wardens, LEV)
	Lay 2 x hedgerows annually	2020-2025	Parks (Tree wardens, LEV)
Review management schedules	Review from baseline data and add into management schedule	2025	Stds & Development,

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Identify sites that meet LWS criteria and agree designation where appropriate	Monitor and review 25% annually existing hedgerow sites and designate where	2021-2026	Nat Con
Establish base-line of hedgerow habitat and condition	Review Phase 1 data of hedgerows and update database and digitised maps	2021	Nat Con
Encourage research related projects with Universities, Schools and Colleges to increase understanding of the value of hedgerows	Develop locally based research on value of hedgerows for foraging wildlife, seasonality of blossom, impacts of lighting with 3 x research projects	2026	Nat Con, LRWT

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Provide formal/informal training in techniques to land managers, site wardens,	Review training needs with Council Services and organise 1-2 training event	2022	Nat Con, T&W, TCV
Raise awareness of the value of hedgerows	Design and install 5 x interpretation boards at sites containing important hedgerow habitat (Hamilton, Western, Knighton, Watermead,	2025	Parks
	15 tree wardens trained in 2019 – identify	On-going	Parks, Nat Con

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Provide formal/informal training in techniques to land managers, site wardens, volunteers etc	Review training needs with Council Services and organise 1-2 training event	2021	Nat Con, T&W, TCV
Raise awareness of the value of hedgerows	Design and install 5 x interpretation boards at sites containing important hedgerow habitat (Hamilton, Western, Knighton, Watermead, CHCP)	2025	Parks
	15 tree wardens trained in 2019 – identify and agree monitoring and work areas annually and allocate to officers/wardens	On-going	Parks, Nat Con
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con

Need charts

Mature and Veteran Trees

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

4. Mature and Veteran Trees

4.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

Mature/Notable –a tree which is significant locally because it is special or particularly large compared to the trees surrounding it. Notable trees are usually mature, that is, they produce fruits or flowers at an age when they are most productive. The age of maturity is dependent on the species with some trees maturing faster than others e.g. a Silver birch matures more quickly than a slow-growing Oak tree

Ancient – a tree that has reached a great age in comparison with others of the same species. The age of the tree will differ between species depending on the growth rate and usual life expectancy

Veteran – a tree which can be any age, but shows ancient characteristics; they are usually hollow or contain rotting heartwood which is essential for many species, but especially fungi and invertebrates. They are defined as those that occur as individuals or small groups rather than in woodlands. (Ancient Tree Forum 2020)

The current extent of mature trees in Leicester is based on data collected from various sources from 1997-2018. The trees are on Council-owned land managed by Trees & Woodlands. Sites include roadside verges, parks and cemeteries. Currently there are no formally designated trees in private gardens

4.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Trees soften and “green” the landscape by screening, reducing noise pollution and mitigate impacts of climate change, especially by sequestering carbon, cooling temperatures by shading and reducing the urban heat island effect, reducing air pollution from vehicle emissions and alleviating flooding. They contribute to health and well-being and provide an important habitat for many species – particularly birds for nesting, bats for roosting and small mammals generally.

They are also particularly important for invertebrates, for example more than 75 nationally important species of beetle were recorded living in mature oak trees within Braunstone Park. Large numbers of lichen are also associated with long-lived mature trees.

The Local Wildlife Site mature tree criteria specify the girth, its native status and additional features such as dead branches, heart-rot and other signs of decay. The trees are designated individually or as small groups of up to 20 trees/ha. Examples of such groups are located in Western Park, Abbey Park, Braunstone Park and Welford Road Cemetery.

Mature trees have also been identified during surveys which have an intrinsic wildlife and amenity value and are a material consideration in planning. These trees may not have attained the girth for designation or be classified as veteran, but they are still considered an important asset and priority habitat.

Associated Habitat Action Plan	**Associated Species Action Plans**
Woodland	Bats
Mature/Veteran Trees	Birds
	Hedgehogs
	Amphibians/Reptiles

4.3 THREATS

Main factors affecting mature trees in Leicester are:

- Diseases such as Dutch-elm disease, Horse Chestnut Scale, Ash die-back and Phytopthora in Alder;
- Climate-change extremes – drought, flooding and high winds may be exacerbated in an urban environment;
- Development impacting on the Root Protection Zone (RPZ) from excavation works and cycle lanes;
- Public safety issues – removal of moribund and dead specimens near to POS;
- Breaches of TPOs and inadequate protection of trees within Conservation Areas are not always identified; fines and replanting may not address losses
- Atmospheric nutrient input and air borne pollution

4.4 DISTRIBUTION OF MATURE AND VETERAN TREES

Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2018-2020

4.5 MATURE AND VETERAN TREE ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance veteran tree habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat	Retain all mature/veteran trees wherever possible and if maintain database of veteranised trees and report annually to	On-going	T&W
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2021 - 2025	Parks, T&W, Nat Con

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Provide specific management advice on the value of mature/veteran trees to site managers and private landowners	Produce leaflet and links to this technique and publish on website to promote good practice on public/privately owned sites	2022	T&W

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Identify trees that meet LWS criteria and agree designation where appropriate	Monitor and review 25% annually notable tree sites and designate where appropriate	2021-2026	Nat Con
Review street trees that meet the criteria	Map 25 % roads with avenues of trees of significant biodiversity and aesthetic value that may contribute to the Nature Recovery Network – link to Leicester Bee Roads for	2021/22	Nat Con, Tree Wardens
Set up a Veteran Tree Group with conservation organisations and tree specialists to identify research to further understand relationship and inter-actions	Deliver 2 x research projects related to biodiversity and wildlife value of veteran trees	2026	UoL, Nat Con

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Provide formal/informal training in techniques to land managers, site wardens, volunteers etc	Organise training event with arboriculture contractors in Leicester on best practice, wildlife legislation and techniques	2021/22	T&W
Raise awareness of the value of veteran trees	Install 5 x interpretation boards at sites containing important veteran tree habitat (CHCP, Western, Braunstone, Knighton	2025	Parks
Support LEV tree warden scheme and encourage survey and monitoring tree	Identify and agree monitoring and work areas annually	On-going	Parks, Nat Con
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con

Foreword

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

5. Neutral Grassland and Flood Meadow

5.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

Leicester once supported large areas of wildflower-rich grassland but little of this habitat now remains due to continued expansion of the city and demands of an increasing population.

The habitat can be divided into two major types: flood-meadow grasslands and grasslands in drier areas. The former are managed traditionally by grazing and as hay meadows when fields are set-aside to rest, while the traditional management of grasslands in drier areas is either as hay-meadow and after-graze or as pasture.

Most of these areas are now limited to remnant sites contained within parks or on the outer edge of the City within the green wedges. Examples include grassland around Aylestone, Birstall, Braunstone Park, Kirby Frith and Anstey.

5.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Common Knapweed *(Centaurea nigra)*, Cowslip *(Primula veris)*, Yellow-rattle *(Rhinanthus minor)*, Pepper-saxifrage *(Silaum silaus)* and Adder's-tongue Fern *(Ophioglossum vulgatum)* are characteristic of species-rich grasslands in Leicester and Leicestershire. Most are declining in value and there has been a loss of this habitat type since the 1930s which has accelerated in recent years.

The wetter flood meadows support typical species associated with a higher water table such as Meadowsweet ***(Filipendula ulmaria)***, Marsh marigold *(Caltha palustris)*, Great burnet *(Sanguisorba officinalis)* and Ragged robin *(Lychnis flos-cuculi)*. Aylestone Meadows has some particularly good areas of flood meadow due to periodic flood events and inundation with water.

Locally rare plants such as Tubular water dropwort *(Oenanthe fistulosa)*, Crow garlic *(Allium vineale)*, Spiny restharrow *(Ononis spinosa)*, and Grass-leaved vetchling *(Lathyrus nissolia)* still survive in some of the quality grasslands in the city and these sites are likely to meet UK BAP criteria.

The Local Wildlife Site grassland criteria include fairly species-rich semi-improved grassland if it contains seven indicator species that are present as "Occasional" or more. Species include Meadow buttercup, Bird's-foot trefoil, Red clover, Meadow vetchling and Sorrel prevail where the geology, soil is supported by appropriate management.

Associated Habitat Action Plans
Allotments
Urban Parks and Roadside Verges

Associated Species Action Plans
Insects/Pollinators
Birds
Bats
Hedgehog

5.3 THREATS

Main factors affecting neutral grassland in Leicester are:

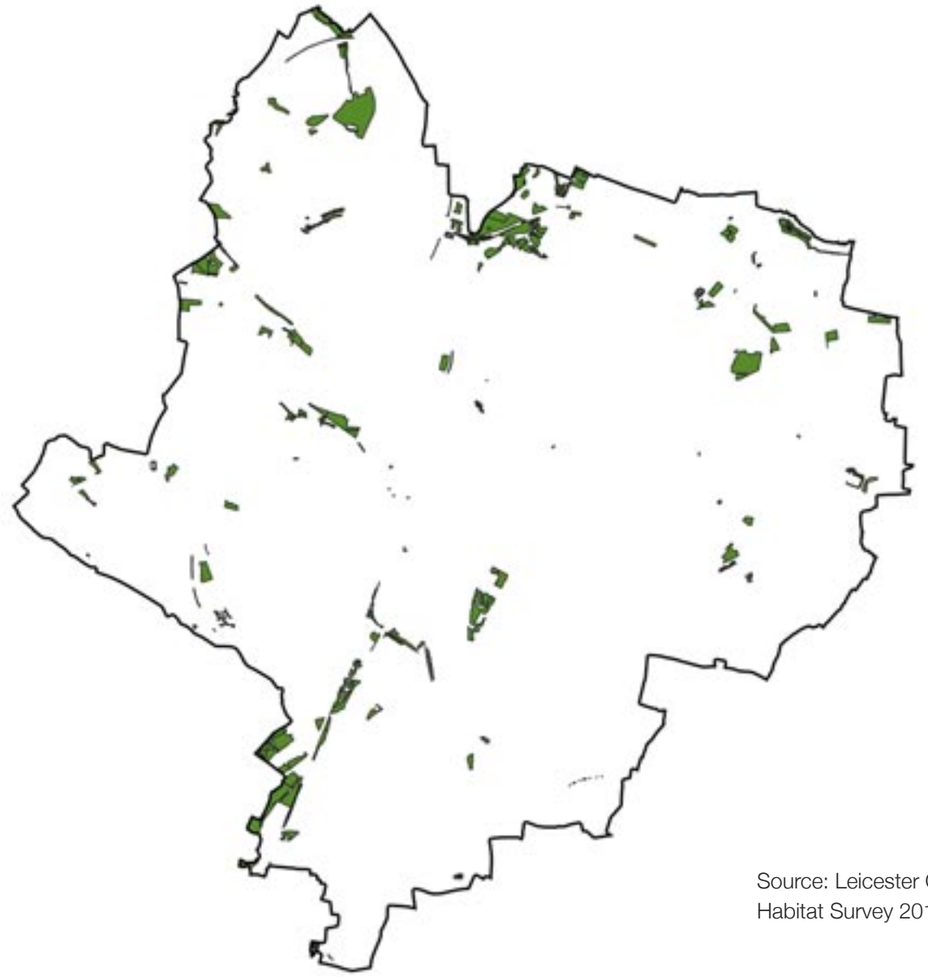
- Change of hay-meadow grazing to grazing including intensive horse grazing.
- Inappropriate management or lack of any management resulting in changes to rank grassland and scrub.
- Loss of sites to development.
- People pressure – sites on the edge of urban areas used regularly by dog walkers, cyclists resulting in increased nutrients, localised erosion and transfer of more common ruderal species;
- Inability to use grazing as a management technique due to difficulties associated with an urban setting
- Anti-social behaviour – including fly-tipping and arson
- Application of herbicides and pesticides
- Atmospheric nutrient input
- Long-term impact of climate change with sites lost due to severe periods of drought or flooding

5.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Guidance on management of lowland grassland

https://www.google.co.uk/?gws_rd=ssl#q=guidance+on+lowland+grassland+management+handbook

5.5 DISTRIBUTION OF MEADOW GRASSLANDS



Source: Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2018-20

5.5 NEUTRAL GRASSLAND AND FLOOD MEADOWS ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance grassland habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat	Identify areas as BOS to create specie-rich grassland – survey 50% of sites each year	2020-2021	Nat Con
	Create areas of species-rich grassland on 25% of sites identified of low diversity within Parks (5% annually)	2020-2025	Parks, Nat Con
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2020 - 2025	Parks, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Review Grassland Strategy and management schedules	Review from baseline data, map all areas of meadow and relaxed mowing within Parks and add into management schedule	2020	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
	Update Parks Development Plans and LNR Plans and LWS Schedules with agreed maintenance	2025	Parks, Stds & Development, Nat Con
Review grazing regimes and bring LWS and LNR into favourable status	Review and agree good grazing practice on designated sites managed by short-term tenancies to secure favourable condition	Review 2021 Favourable status 2025	Nat Con, E&BS
Review Longhorn cattle and extend use across sites grazed	Work with partners to secure long-term future use of Longhorn cattle on sites of wildlife value to secure appropriate management	2021	Nat Con, LRWT
Increase the number of grassland sites in favourable condition	50 % LCC species-rich grassland to be in favourable conservation status	2025	Parks
Arrange regular training days and reviews of equipment	Arrange 2 x Grassland Management days for LCC and partners to inform on management in an urban setting. Repeat sessions every 2-3 years	2021-2025	Parks
Provide advice to Parks on creation and management of meadows	Produce specification for creation and maintenance of wildflower-rich verges and include as standard in Highway schemes	2020	Nat Con

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Identify grasslands that meet LWS criteria and agree designation where appropriate	Review all sites identified and designate any meeting the criteria as LWS or as cLWS	2021	Nat Con, LRWT
Review meadow areas and Phase 1 maps of species-rich or unimproved grassland to inform on Local Plan, BNG and NRN	Visit 50% sites annually to update Phase 1 maps and annual monitoring for Single-Status and OEP reporting to report on condition status	2020-2021	Nat Con

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Add further Wild Places (NatureSpot) and Parks for Pollinators Projects to raise awareness	Add 5 Wild Places where species-rich grassland areas are present on POS and review as more areas created	2020	Nat Con
Update Parks and Biodiversity webpages	Promote Projects – Parks for Pollinators	On-going	Parks, Nat Con
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con

Urban Parks and Road Verges

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

6. Urban Parks and Road Verges

6.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

Although not a priority habitat in its own right, this type of land use is widely distributed across Leicester and provides valuable spaces for wildlife to thrive and disperse.

Urban parks, open spaces and roadside verges include areas that are publically accessible and are maintained and managed by the council primarily for amenity and recreation, but increasingly for wildlife too. This habitat type includes roadside verges across Leicester.

There are over 130 parks and open spaces which vary in size and formality. They include waterways, formal parks and flower gardens, country parks, sports fields and wildlife areas. Some of these areas are designated for their nature conservation value as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) whilst others are part of the green infrastructure network (GINs) due to their strategic position in the wildlife corridor or opportunity to improve their value for wildlife.

Most of the Parks and green spaces have at least a small area set aside for wildlife which may include long grass and wildflower areas, ponds, bee posts, insect-friendly planting and nest boxes.

Roadside verges are made up of avenues of mature trees, shrubs and generally species-poor amenity grass. In the past few years a number of areas have been sown with wildflower seed to increase their wildlife value and add amenity to the area. The purpose is to create habitats of value to our declining pollinators whilst improving the connectivity of sites for wildlife generally across the city. These areas have been promoted as part of the over-arching Leicester Bee Road project and further information on actions is available in Leicester's Pollinator Strategy 2020 - 2025.

There are opportunities for re-wilding some of our Parks and creating or enhancing more habitat. Many of the Parks could accommodate new meadows, ponds and hedgerows. Locations for more woodland, orchards, brownfield-type sites are possible with agreement on how they can be managed to achieve their optimum value in the future.

Associated Habitat Action Plans
Neural Grassland
Woodlands, Mature/Veteran Trees
Lakes/Ponds

Associated Species Action Plans
Insects/Pollinators
Birds
Mammals - all

6.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

The network of green spaces provides a mosaic of differing habitats that help to support a range of species by providing a mix of breeding sites, foraging areas and shelter.

Despite the types of habitat and their regular use, they support national or local BAP species associated with these habitats and frequently support populations of priority species such as Song thrush *(Turdus philomelos)*, Bullfinch *(Pyrrhula pyrrhula)*, Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Bumble bees, Solitary bees, Great Crested Newts *(Triturus cristatus)* and Hedgehogs *(Erinaceus europaeus)*.

They are also important host sites for pollinators and many more common species and due to their accessibility may provide a primary point of contact for many people within an urban and otherwise busy environment.

6.3 THREATS

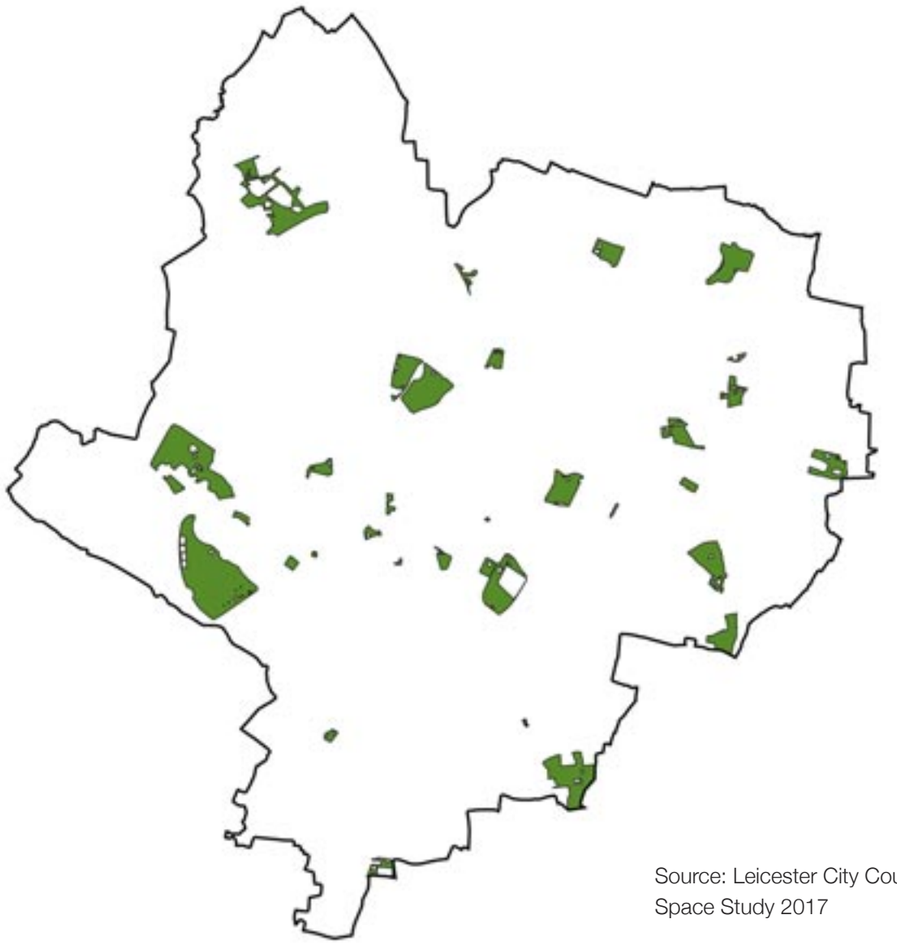
Main factors affecting urban parks and open spaces in Leicester are:

- The differing needs of management for biodiversity and amenity/landscape demands – including mowing regimes;
- Development opportunities and loss of areas to house building or road schemes;
- Disturbance, trampling and heavy-use of parks and open spaces by public and dog walkers, cyclists etc.;
- Increased incidents of anti-social behaviour e.g. vandalism and damage to structures, habitats and disturbance to associated species;
- Isolation and lack of connectivity to other open space and/or similar habitats;
- Resourcing – staffing and equipment to manage areas adequately – infrequent management and increased disturbance when areas are cut back severely

6.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Links to websites to manage and value urban areas for wildlife http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6454
https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-public-space1.pdf

6.5 DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN PARKS



Source: Leicester City Council Green Space Study 2017

6.6 URBAN PARKS AND ROAD VERGES ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat	Identify areas as BOS to create/restore priority habitats – survey 50% of sites each year	2020-2021	Nat Con
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2020 - 2025	Parks, Nat Con
Increase number of roadside wildflower-rich verges	Increase length/area of roadside verge annually with wildflower/pollinator species (10% annually)	2020-2025	Parks, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Encourage a flexible approach to management with greater emphasis on "Re-Wilding" areas where appropriate	Review Phase 1 data, ground-truth and identify sites that may be appropriate for re-wilding. Agree with Service areas and secure future management through BNG payments/funding wherever possible	2020-2022	Nat Con, Parks, Std & Dev
	Review from baseline data, map all areas relaxed mowing on parks and roadside verges and add into management schedule	2020	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
	Update Parks Development Plans and LNR Plans and LWS Schedules with agreed maintenance	2025	Parks, Stds & Development, Nat Con
Identify sites that may meet criteria for Urban ELMs	Secure 1 x site under ELMs and review	2025	Nat Con, Parks, Std & Dev, E&BS
Provide advice to Parks and highways on creation and management of meadows and wildflower-rich verges	Produce specification for creation and maintenance of wildflower-rich verges and include as standard in Highway schemes	2020	Stds & Development

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Establish baseline of data for Leicester to show natural capital assets associated with green space	Update database and LRERC records for Phase 1 and Species data on Parks and Open Spaces	2021	Nat Con, LRERC, LRWT
Identify research projects linked to green space, natural capital and associated benefits	Support funding bids in city-wide research linked to benefits of green space, biodiversity and impacts of climate change	2020-2021	UoL, Nat Con, Sustainability
Improve understanding of value of roadside verges for pollinators	Annual survey and record plants and animals at roadside verges where wildflower-rich verges created	2020-2025	Nat Con, UoL

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Add further Wild Places (NatureSpot) and Parks to raise awareness of wildlife on parks	Add 5 Wild Places on POS and review as more areas created and encourage more people to record. Cross-reference on LCC and partner webpages	2020	Nat Con
Update Parks and Biodiversity webpages	Promote Projects – Parks for Pollinators	On-going	Parks, Nat Con
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con
Run events and activities to encourage recording of wildlife and raise awareness	Run 2 x wildlife-related events annually and link to partner events such as 30-Days Wild	2020-2025	Nat Con, LRWT
	Organise 6-8/yr guided walks with wildlife specialists as part of the Walk on the Wild side series at key sites	On-going	Highways, NatureSpot

Watercourse (Rivers and Brooks)

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

7. Watercourse (Rivers and Brooks)

7.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

The River Soar along with the Grand Union Canal with which it is partially integrated provides a strategic corridor for wildlife which helps link the city to the surrounding countryside. These watercourses form part of the larger Soar catchment with the River Soar flowing through the central part of Leicester from Aylestone (south) towards Watermead and Birstall (north). The river has been altered along some stretches such as the "Mile Straight" and parts are referred to as the "old River Soar" which follows the original watercourse.

Many smaller brooks flow into the Soar from the west and east boundaries with major tributaries such as the Melton, Braunstone, Saffron, Rothley and Willow Brooks providing a continuous source of water and important blue-green network along to help wildlife disperse.

Many sections of these watercourses have been modified either to reduce flooding or to allow navigation, but more natural sections still persist such as at Aylestone Meadows where the River Biam and River Soar meander through the water meadows; the Saffron Brook with its earth banks, pools and riffles flowing through Knighton Park and Rothley Brook forming a diverse range of habitats along the boundary of Castle Hill Country Park to the north-west.

The River Soar and several tributaries are designated as LWSs with adjacent sites also having potential to support wildlife and contribute to the wider green/blue ecological network.

7.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

The River Soar supports a diverse range of wildlife, partly due to a significant improvement in water quality in recent years. Plants such as Yellow water lily *(Nuphar lutea)* and Floating sweet grass *(Glyceria fluitans)*, often associated with clear, unpolluted water are now readily colonising areas. The more natural banks of the River Soar and tributaries provide habitat for Water vole *(Arvicola amphibius)*, Kingfisher *(Alcedo atthis)* and Otter *(Lutra lutra)* while all watercourses provide some habitat for water fowl such as Moorhen *(Gallinula chloropus)*, Mallard *(Anas platyrhynchos)* and Mute Swan *(Cygnus olor)*. Major predators such as Pike *(Esox Lucius)* have been observed throughout the Soar and indicate fish populations are healthy.

Plants such as Skullcap *(Scutellaria lateriflora)*, Angelica *(Angelica sylvestris)*, Common reed *(Phragmites australis)* and Branched bur-reed *(Sparganium erectum)* fringe the natural banks and provide a haven for pollinators and aquatic wildlife.

Associated Habitat Action Plans	**Associated Species Action Plans**
Wetlands	Bats
Mature/Veteran Trees	Birds
	Amphibians/Reptiles
	Otter
	Watervole

7.3 THREATS

Main factors affecting watercourses in Leicester are:

- Climate change – excessive drought or floods;
- Direct and indirect threats from development – including historic and on-going development resulting in loss of ecological processes;
- Hydrological changes resulting from artificial processes, artificial drainage, abstraction
- Carrier to dispersal – from weirs and dams – also impacting on natural hydrology within water courses
- Pollution – outfall pipes from industrial estates, outfall from misconnections on washing machines, runoff from roads etc; Litter, plastics and fly-tipping
- Sedimentation of tributaries from upstream and urban runoff
- Conflicting use and disturbance e.g. recreational activities – boating, canoeing, wild swimming, access by dogs;
- Lack of management or inappropriate management;
- In-filling with fear of to public health and safety from death or injury;
- Release and spread of non-native species of flora and fauna

7.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Links to websites to manage and value watercourses areas https://www.ada.org.uk/advice/; https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-environment/flooding-and-severe-weather

7.5 DISTRIBUTION OF OPEN WATERCOURSES

Source: Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2018-20

7.6 WATERCOURSES (RIVERS AND BROOKS) ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance wetland habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat	Identify areas as BOS and complete BOMs on target areas to restore, enhance or re-naturalise watercourses 50% of sites each year	2020-2021	Nat Con
	Complete Scoping study for Saving the Saffron Project to identify and prioritise suitable sites for GI and biodiversity improvements	2021	Flood, EA
	Seek funding/contributions from BNG, Green Lifeboat contributions, Council and other funding opportunities to support creation and maintenance	2020 - 2025	Planning, Nat Con, Flood
Work with partners to identify and prioritise new projects that meet BAP aims and contribute to wider NRN	Consider Natural Flood management schemes to contribute to blue-green network and target BOS. Identify all potential sites based on flood risk and natural capital data	2021	Flood, Nat Con, SCP, S&GUC
Create and restore water courses and associated floodplain at appropriate sites	Complete works at Aylestone Meadows, Everards Meadow, Marsden Lane	2021	Regen, Landscape, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Develop guidance and strategies on appropriate management to optimise biodiversity value	Produce Management Plans for new sites at Thurnby Lodge Nature Area, Aylestone Meadows (River Biam)	2020	Nat Con, Parks
	Complete Riverside Management Plan to co-ordinate management of River corridor from Aylestone to Birstall	2022	Nat Con, Parks
Programme in sensitive conservation management of riparian habitats along Soar	Review from baseline data, map all areas add into management schedule	2021	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
	Identify and agree works undertaken by Parks (GM and LEV), develop programme of work to enhance biodiversity 1 km/yr	2021	Parks, Nat Con
Review conservation management of brooks under council and EA responsibility and agree appropriate management to conserve and enhance wildlife value	Update Watercourses Management Guidance and schedule annual programme of work to be phased in across the city (5 km/yr)	2021 -	Flood

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Encourage local Universities to study correlation between water environment and plastics; impacts of climate change on associated species	Continue work with UoL to develop research projects related to plastics pollution (1 x research project)	2021	UoL, SCP, Nat Con

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Promote conservation volunteers, plastics and project case studies throughout the year	Work with partners to promote good practice and publish on webpages	On-going	Nat Con, Flood
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con
Programme in conservation management of watercourse re collection of litter/plastics etc	Schedule in programme of conservation days on boats to collect litter/plastics (XX/yr- subject to review)	On-going	Parks

Wetlands – (Canal, Lakes and Ponds)

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

8. Wetlands – (Canal, Lakes and Ponds)

8.1 HABITAT DEFINITION AND CURRENT STATUS

This habitat includes eutrophic (nutrient-rich) fresh water with little or no flow and man-made structures such as the Grand Union Canal, lakes and ponds. Although generally containing high levels of nutrients, they also support high levels of biodiversity.

The Grand Union Canal is partially designated as a LWS and is also part of the strategic Blue-Green Network which readily connects with the River Soar as it flows through the city. Large areas of open water at Watermead CP are also designated as LNR and LWS whilst the lakes at Abbey Park and Braunstone Park provide attractive areas for waterfowl to nest and breed.

Well-established ponds have been designated for their species assemblages and support locally important populations of amphibians at Western Park, Evington Park and the University Arboretum. A significant number of new wetland areas have been created through development and flood alleviation schemes in the last ten years. These have been designed to mimic natural systems and some of the best examples are Hamilton lagoons, Ellis Meadows and more recently at Ashton Green.

A series of recent interventions running adjacent to the Soar have created a number of complimentary habitats whilst providing temporary water storage at times of flood. Examples include destination sites such as Cardinal's Meadow, Swans Nest Wetland, Little Meade and Birstall Meadows.

8.2 CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

waterfowl, mammals and plants. The range and size of the wetlands form part of an extensive and expanding network of sites across the city – linked to requirements for flood alleviation, these water bodies are now more sustainable and less likely to dry out at key times of the year when used for breeding.

Typical species associated with this habitat are water fowl such as Mute swan *(C.olor)*, Coot *(Fulica atra)* and Moorhen *(G. chloropus)* with more unusual species such as Teal *(Anas crecca)* and Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)* associated with the less disturbed wetlands. Common frog, Toad and Smooth newt are all frequent together with Grass snake to the north and south of the city along with protected species such as Great crested newt.

Associated Habitat Action Plan
Rivers and Brooks

Associated Species Action Plans
Bats
Birds
Amphibians/Reptiles
Otter
Watervole

8.3 THREATS

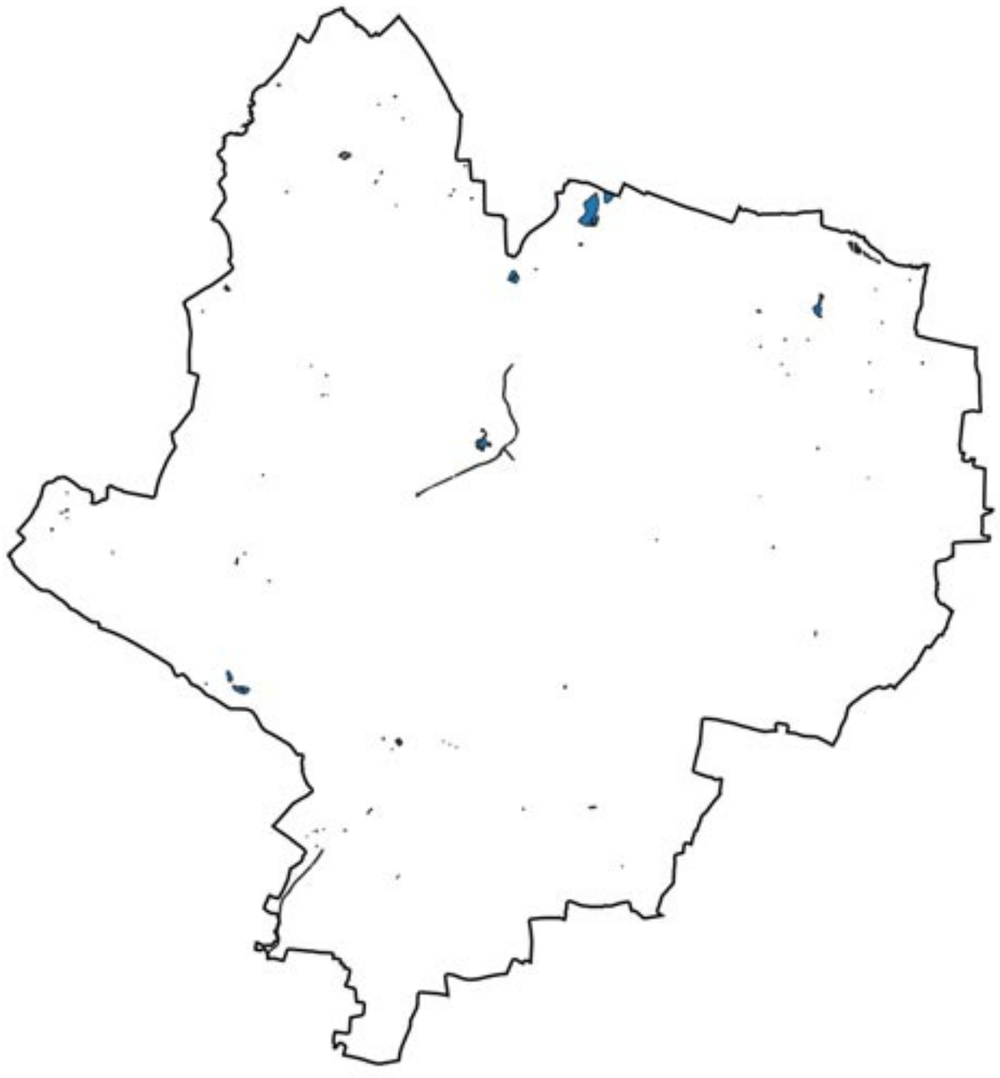
Main factors affecting wetlands in Leicester are:

- Climate change – excessive droughts or floods
- Direct and indirect threats from development;
- Pollution – outfall pipes from industrial estates, outfall from misconnections on washing machines, runoff from roads etc; litter and plastics
- Conflicting use and disturbance e.g. recreational activities – access by dogs and people
- Lack of management or inappropriate management;
- In-filling with fear of health and safety;
- Release and spread of non-native species of flora and fauna

8.4 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Links to websites to manage and value wetland areas **https://www.trentriverstrust.org/soar/; https://www.froglife.org/**

8.5 DISTRIBUTION OF WETLANDS



Source: Leicester City Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2018-20

Table XX: Ponds and Lakes and their Designation in Leicester

Type	Site	Street	LCC Services	Status
Lake	Abbey Park	Abbey Park Road	Parks	
Pond	Appleton Park	Peebles Way	Parks	
Pond	Ashton Green	Bluebell Walk/Glebelands	Parks	
Pond	Ashton Green - includes former Churchbell Way pon	Leicester Road	Parks	
Pond	Astill Park	Bennion Road	Parks	
Pond	Aylestone	Canal Street	Parks	LNR
Pond	Aylestone - boardwalk ponds	Evesham Road	Parks	LWS/LWS
Pond	Aylestone - Evesham Road and gasholder ponds	Evesham Road	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Aylestone - pond near St Andrew's	Canal Street	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Aylestone - Whippet fields	Braunstone Lane East	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Beaumont Park	Bennion Road	Parks	
Pond	Bennion Pools	Bevan Road	Parks	
Pond	Birstall Meadows 5 ponds	Birstall Road	Property	LWS/LNR
Lake	Braunstone Park Ecology Lake - Southern Lake	Cort Crescent	Parks	
Lake	Braunstone Park Fishing Lake - Northern Lake	Cort Crescent	Parks	
Pond	Cardinal's Meadow	Abbey Park Road	Parks	cLWS
Pond	Castle Gardens	Castle Street	Parks	
Ponds	Castle Hill Country Park - 6 ponds	Rothley Brook Meadow, Anstey Lane	Parks	cLWS/cLNR
Pond	Churchfields, Braunstone	Woodshaw Rise	Parks	cLWS
Lake	Ellis Meadows	Corporation Road	Parks	cLWS
Pond	Evington Park - near house	Ethel Road	Parks	LWS
Pond	Evington Park - off Cordery Road	Ethel Road	Parks	LWS
Pond	Fulford Road Open Space	Fulford Road	Parks	LWS
Pond	Gilmorton Open Space	Gilmorton Avenue	Parks	cLWS
Pond	Glenfrith Ponds	Lady Hay Road	Parks	
Pond	Goss Meadows	Anstey Lane	Property	LWS/LNR
Canal	Grand Union Canal		C&RT	LWS/GIN
Pond	Greenlife pond, Humberstone Park	Uppingham Road	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Hamilton Meadow	Hamilton Meadow Ponds	Private	cLWS
Lake	Hamilton Park	Sandhills Avenue	Parks	
Pond	Humberstone Community Gardens	Vicarage Lane	Parks	
Pond	Humberstone golf course	Gipsy Lane	Private	LWS
Pond	Knighton Park - Heath Garden	Palmeston Way	Parks	
Pond	Lily Marriot gardens	Coleman Road	Parks	
Pond	Little Meade	Thurcaston Rd	Parks	cLWS
Pond	Mountain Road Flood Meadow	Mountain Road	Property	LWS
Pond	Nelson Mandela Park	Welford Road	Parks	
Pond	Oaklands Nature Reserve	Oakland Avenue	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Orchards pond (near garage)	Groby Road	TCV	LWS/LNR
Pond	Orchards/City Farm pond	Groby Road	City Farm	LWS/LNR
Pond	Piper Way Nature Garden	Piper Way	Parks	
Pond	Prebend Gardens	Prebend Street	Parks	
Pond	Rancliffe Gardens	Priestley Road	Parks	
Pond	Roode Meade	Loughborough Road	Parks	
Pond	Shady Lane Arboretum	Shady Lane	Parks	LWS
Pond	Sir John's Wood	Featherstone Drive	Parks	
Pond	SSSI and Adjacent Land LWS	Lewisher Road	Property	
Pond	Stokeswood Park	Groby Road	Parks	LWS/cLNR
Pond	Swan's Nest Wetland	Corporation Road	Parks	LWS
Pond	Victoria Park Nature Area	Victoria Park Road	Parks	
Pond	Washbrook Nature Area	Knighton Lane East	Parks	LWS
Lake	Watermead Country Park	Alderton Close	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Watermead Country Park (4 ponds)	Melton Road	Parks	LWS/LNR
Pond	Western golfcourse (former)	Sudamore Road	Parks	LWS
Pond	Western Park	Park View - top meadow	Parks	
Pond	Western Park - adjacent to lower meadow	Hinckley Road	Parks	
Pond	Western Park - hedge pond	Hinckley Road	Parks	LWS
Pond	Willowbrook Park/Thurnby Lodge	Thurncourt Road	Parks	LWS
Pond		Bedale Drive	Parks	
Pond		Brompton Road	Parks	
Pond		Bryony Road	Parks	
Pond		Celendine Road	Parks	
Pond		Hughenden Drive	Parks	
Pond		Kestrel Close	Parks	
Pond		Snape Close	Parks	

WETLANDS (CANAL, LAKES AND PONDS)

Leicester's
Biodiversity Action Plan

8.6 WETLANDS (CANAL, LAKES AND PONDS) ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance wetland habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat	Identify areas as BOS and complete BOMs on target areas to restore, enhance or re-naturalise wetlands 50% of sites each year in preparation for future funded schemes and create or restore 5 x wetlands	2020-2021 and 2025	Nat Con, Landscape, Flood
	Complete Scoping study for Saving the Saffron Project to identify and prioritise suitable sites for GI and biodiversity improvements	2021	Flood, EA
	Work with partners to support existing landscape projects e.g. Soar-Wreake Initiative and identify new funding opportunities	2020 - 2025	Nat Con, SCP, Soar & GUC
Create additional ponds on sites where future management can be secured through BNG	Establish a minimum of 10 sites suitable to support amphibians and/or reptile populations, monitor and publish findings	2025	Nat Con, Sustainability, NE
Consider options for district licensing for GCNs	Review requirements for pond creation, licensing and mitigation inform LPA regarding implementation	2020	Planning, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Develop guidance and strategies on appropriate management to optimise biodiversity value	Produce Management Plans for new sites recently completed at Cardinal's Meadow and Swans Nest Wetlands	2020	Nat Con, Parks
	Update Management Plan and maintenance schedule for Ellis Meadows	2021	Parks
Programme in sensitive conservation management of riparian habitats along Soar	Review from baseline data, map all areas add into management schedule	2021	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
Provide guidance to land managers on appropriate management of ponds, wetlands and terrestrial habitat	Produce a series of leaflets and publish on website to ensure availability, cross-reference with case studies and good practice	2021	Nat Con, LRWT

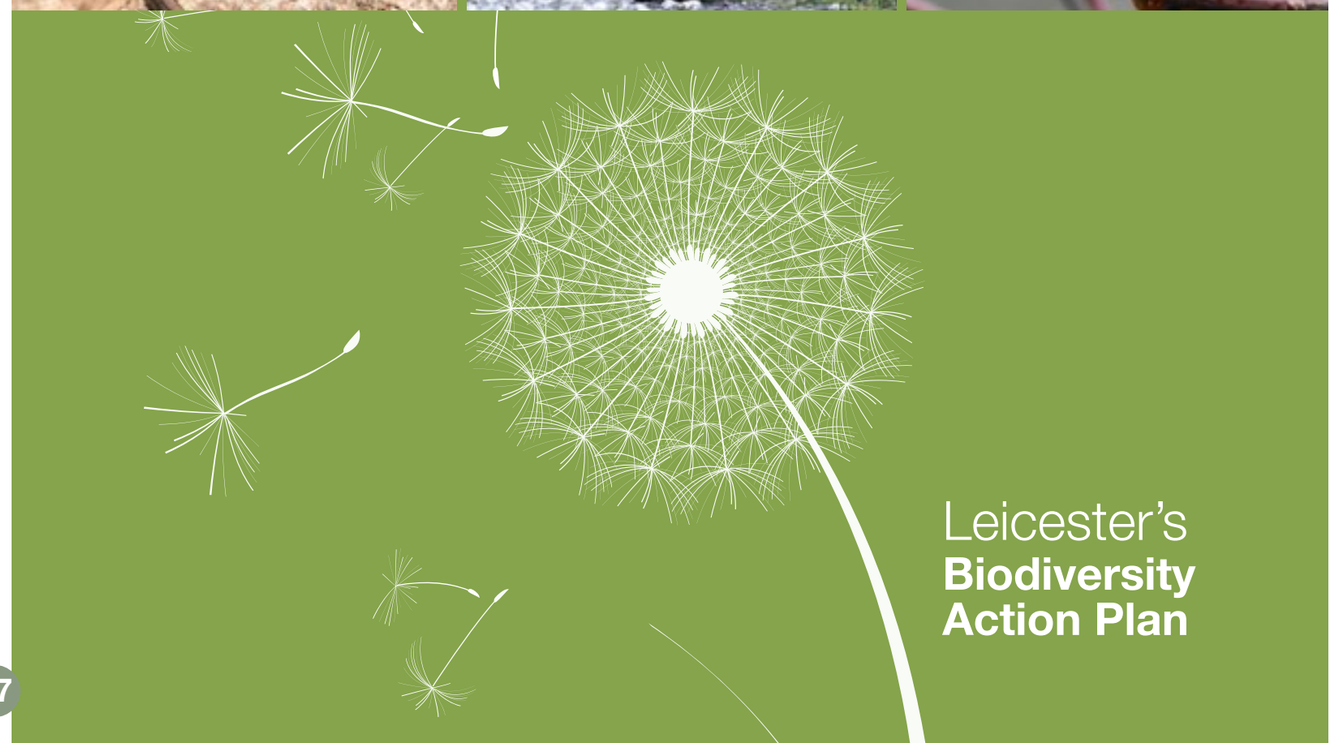
- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Review site designation for field ponds and/or which support populations of amphibians	Review Phase 1 Habitat maps and update pond locations, ground truth and designate if meet criteria (50% ponds/yr)	2021	Nat Con
Encourage recorders and public to submit records to organisations collating records	Maintain records on local database and exchange with LRERC	On-going	Nat Con, LRERC
Encourage schools/public in National Recording Schemes run by Froglife and Herpetofauna Group	Encourage 10 schools to participate in Earthwatch and target species	2025	Sustainability
	Set up Pond Watch to coincide with Amphibian/Reptile (1 day/yr)	2021	Parks - CDT

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Schedule in programme of work with volunteers and corporate organisations with focus on ponds and designated sites	Programme in conservation tasks – to include rolling programme of pond work (6/yr – subject to review)	On-going	Parks, Nat Con
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con
Work with partners to promote good practice and publish on webpages – link to relevant species action plans	Include 1 x site (WMCP) as a Destination Park to promote biodiversity and wildlife opportunities	2023	Parks, Nat Con, SCP

Species Action Plans



Species Action Plans

The broad BAP objectives are set out fully in Part 1 of the Plan and in this section each Species Action Plan (SAP) will specify objectives and actions for individual species where appropriate.

Part 2 of the Plan is divided into the main species groups found in Leicester that are considered Priority and/or Protected Species, namely Birds and Mammals. Plans for species within those Groups have a specific Species Action Plan outlining the key habitat requirements, reasons for decline and what actions are necessary to help their conservation.

Other species groups such as Amphibians and Reptiles are included as general Action Plans and may be subject to review. Species such as Great Crested Newts (GCNs) *(Triturus cristatus)* and Common toad *(Bufo bufo)* are a protected and priority species. Similarly Reptiles such as Grass snake *(Natrix natrix)*, Common lizard *(Zootoca vivipara)* and Slow worm *(Anguis fragilis)* have all been recorded as present in Leicester, albeit in small numbers and in specialised habitats. The actions to safeguard and enhance the habitat types associated with these species and strengthening of Planning and Policies to safeguard appropriate mitigation and biodiversity net gain will continue to be central to the welfare and conservation status without necessitating a separate Action Plan for each species.

Although invertebrates generally are not addressed in the Plan, it is also recognised that many are Priority and/or Protected Species and should be considered a material consideration if likely to be present within Leicester. Leicester's Pollinator Strategy 2020 – 2025 has gone a long way to recognising the importance of this species group and forms part of a series of documented Actions to aid conservation.

These action plans should also be cross-referenced to the Species Action Plans within the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan (LLR BAP) (2016 – 2026) which considers the wider conservation status and strategic actions to support habitats and species across the city and counties.

Links to these documents and other information can be found in Section 8 Useful References of Part 1 Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 – 2031.

Amphibians and Reptiles

1.1 INTRODUCTION

These species are collectively referred to as *Herpetofauna* and although there are significant differences between Amphibians and Reptiles and their habitat requirements, they are often grouped together for conservation, monitoring and research purposes.

Herpetofauna are cold-blooded vertebrates which rely on external sources of heat to warm their blood. For this reason Reptiles often bask in the sun on open bare soil, short vegetation or log piles whilst Amphibians gain heat by burrowing into warm mud or sheltering on the edges of ponds.

1.2 KEY HABITATS

Amphibians will hibernate under piles of damp leafs, rotting logs or underground tunnels and because Frogs are capable of breathing through their skin to survive, they can live at the bottom of muddy ponds during the winter months where temperatures are less prone to fluctuation. Reptiles tend to hibernate underground where they may use disused mammal burrows, buried stonework, dense tussocky grass and even tree roots. In urban areas they have been found in drains along with Amphibians.

Herpetofauna rely on diurnal changes and as the days become slightly longer, they emerge from their hibernation and immediately make their way to their breeding waterbodies. Usually this is the pond in which they hatched and which they return to year after year. This is especially the case with Toads which often use the same migratory route to return to the larger ponds compared to those frequented by Frogs.

In Leicester the main species found are listed below along with their associated habitat.

* Non-nativ

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat Type	Status
Amphibian	Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*	Damp woodland, grassland, hedgerows, marshes. Breed in small shallow ponds, margins of larger lakes, ditches, puddles and slow-flowing water	Partially Protected
Amphibian	Common Toad	*Bufo bufo*	Open woodland, hedgerows, grassland and gardens, Tolerates dry conditions outside of breeding season. Uses parks and garden ponds to breed and can co-exist with fish.	Partially Protected Priority Species
Amphibian	Great Crested Newt	*Tritus cristatus*	Prefer larger ponds or small lakes, but will breed in smaller ponds and ditches. Often co-exist with Smooth newt. Terrestrail habitat deciduous woodland, mature hedgerows, undisturbed grassland	Fully protected Priority Species
Amphibian	Smooth Newt	*Lissotriton vulgaris*	Prefer small fish-free ponds, garden ponds and ditches with a neutral to alkaline pH. Outside o fbreeding inhabit hedgerows, undisturbed grassland, woodland, gardens, farmland	Partially Protected
Amphibian	Alpine Newt*	*Mesotriton alpestris*	Introudced and gernally found in garden ponds, ditches and drains	
Reptile	Common Lizard	*Zootoca vivpara*	Open, undisturbed habitat such as railway and road embankments	Partially Protected Priority Species
Reptile	Grass Snake	*Natrix natrix*	Open woodland and rides, hedgerows, golf courses, road and railway embankments. Requires lakes and pond for food source, but can be found in terrestiral habitats such as allotments, gardens and compost heaps	Partially Protected Priority Species
Reptile	Slow Worm	*Anguis fragilis*	Open woodland, rough grassland, hedgerows, gardens, allotments, road/rail embankments and brownfield sites.	Partially Protected Priority Species

Associated Habitat Action Plans

Wetlands
Rivers and Brooks
Mature/Veteran Trees

Associated Species Action Plans

Otter
Watervole

1.3 THREATS

Amphibians and Reptiles found in the UK are on the edge of their Northern territory and the more common species tend to be more adaptable and found in a wider range of habitat than the rarer species.

The most significant threats to these species are:

- Loss of habitat – pressure from development and poor management can cause habitats to be lost
- Loss of connecting habitat – creating isolated pockets of habitat. When linking habitat is lost or physical barriers are created by development and road construction. Isolated populations have reduced genetic diversity making them more vulnerable to disease as well as predation and breeding;
- Fish predation – the Common frog is particularly vulnerable to predation from fish which readily eat the tadpoles;
- Climate change and weather conditions – drought causing loss of ponds during the breeding season, floods causing loss of spawn, eggs and larvae if flooded out or nearby rivers/brooks flood into ponds – introducing fish and other invertebrates; desiccation and de-hydration during severe heat; hypothermia and freezing during cold temperatures – impacts on prey/food source too;
- Changes in metabolism and metamorphic rate caused by milder winters which reduce hibernation length and intensity creating poorer body condition in which to breed

1.4 CURRENT STATUS

Amphibians are generally under-recorded in Leicester probably because their presence is in part taken for granted. Anecdotal evidence of Frogs and frog spawn present in the Parks ponds and local gardens has generally been confirmed through garden surveys and information gathered at wildlife events.

The presence of Smooth and Great Crested newts is gathered from ecological survey data from the local record office, Council's nature conservation officers, EA and consultancies. Populations are known and co-exist on several sites with Smooth newts more prevalent on allotment sites and garden ponds. A number of Alpine newt records have been reported in the Evington suburbs and are likely to be associated with garden escapees.

Records of Common lizard are quite rare with occasional records found on sites adjacent to railway lines. It is likely they are under-recorded due to access and lack of survey work. Similarly Slow worms are occasionally recorded on undisturbed habitat such as de-commissioned allotments and hedgerows. These habitats are frequent in Leicester but their population continues to decline. Grass snakes thrive where habitats are suitable such as Aylestone, Watermead and Birstall. There are records of Grass snake on undisturbed banks of the canal by Abbey Park and they are likely to frequent a number of brownfield sites awaiting development along the river corridor.

1.5 LEGAL STATUS

All native species of amphibians and reptiles are offered protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This partial protection means that:

- Reptiles are protected from being killed, injured or sold
- Amphibians are protected from being sold

Great Crested Newts are given additional protection under the Habitat & Species Regulations (2017) from their habitat disturbed whilst being used a place of shelter or breeding

1.6 DISTRIBUTION OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES IN LEICESTER

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	2000 - 2020 Records	Distribution
Amphibian	Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*	258	Well dispersed, but under-recorded
Amphibian	Common Toad	*Bufo bufo*	406	Mainly alongRiver corridor and pond networks
Amphibian	Great Crested Newt	*Tritus cristatus*	82	Glenfield, Birstall, Knighton, Evington
Amphibian	Smooth Newt	*Lissotriton vulgaris*	266	Evington, Hamilton, Glenfield, River Soar, Aylestone, Birtall
Amphibian	Alpine Newt*	*Mesotriton alpestris*	9	Knighton
Reptile	Common Lizard	*Zootoca vivpara*	7	Near to mainline railway south of city
Reptile	Grass Snake	*Natrix natrix*	60	Along River Soar corridor
Reptile	Slow Worm	*Anguis fragilis*	12	Outer areas of city associated with records from School developments

1.7 AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance wetland habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support recovery of amphibians and reptiles	Identify areas as BOS and complete BOMs on target areas to restore, enhance or re-naturalise wetlands 50% of sites each year in preparation for future funded schemes and create or restore 5 x wetlands	2020-2021 and 2025	Nat Con, Landscape, Flood
	Complete Scoping study for Saving the Saffron Project to identify and prioritise suitable sites for GI and biodiversity improvements	2021	Flood, EA
	Work with partners to support existing landscape projects e.g. Soar-Wreake Initiative and identify new funding opportunities	2020 - 2025	Nat Con, SCP, Soar & GUC
Create additional ponds on sites where future management can be secured through BNG	Establish a minimum of 10 sites suitable to support amphibians and/or reptile populations, monitor and publish findings	2025	Nat Con, Sustainability, NE
Consider options for district licensing for GCNs	Review requirements for pond creation, licensing and mitigation inform LPA regarding implementation	2020	Planning, Nat Con
Improve and safeguard routes to breeding waterbodies	Include specification for highway drains and kerbs to reduce risk of injury to amphibians to inform planning requirements	2021	Nat Con, Highways

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Develop guidance and strategies on appropriate management to optimise biodiversity value	Produce Management Plans for new sites recently completed at Cardinal's Meadow and Swans Nest Wetlands	2020	Nat Con, Parks
	Update Management Plan and maintenance schedule for Ellis Meadows	2021	Parks
Programme in sensitive conservation management of riparian habitats and ponds	Review from baseline data, map all areas add into management schedule	2021	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
Provide guidance to land managers on appropriate management of ponds, wetlands and terrestrial habitat (hibernacula)	Produce a series of leaflets and publish on website to ensure availability, cross-reference with case studies and good practice	2021	Nat Con, LRWT

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Review site designation for field ponds and/or which support populations of amphibians	Review Phase 1 Habitat maps and update pond locations, ground truth and designate if meet criteria (50% ponds/yr)	2021	Nat Con
Encourage recorders and public to submit records to organisations collating records	Maintain records on local database and exchange with LRERC	On-going	Nat Con, LRERC
Encourage schools/public in National Recording Schemes run by Froglife and Herpetofauna Group	Encourage 10 schools to participate in Earthwatch and target species	2025	Sustainability
	Set up Pond Watch to coincide with Amphibian/Reptile (1 day/yr)	2021	Parks - CDT

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Schedule in programme of work with volunteers and corporate organisations with focus on ponds and designated sites	Programme in conservation tasks – to include rolling programme of pond work (6/yr – subject to review)	On-going	Parks, Nat Con
Use a range of media to regularly promote projects and public/partner engagement	Publicise in annual Making Wildlife Count report and digital media	On-going	Nat Con
Work with partners to promote good practice and publish on webpages – link to relevant species action plans	Include 1 x site (WMCP) as a Destination Park to promote biodiversity and wildlife opportunities	2023	Parks, Nat Con, SCP
Encourage homeowners and private landowners to create ponds	Link to national pond creation schemes and encourage creation of 5 ponds/yr	2025	LRWT

Birds

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Birds are probably the best-known of all animals that frequent our towns and cities. Leicester is no exception with over 300 species having been recorded across the different seasons. The wealth of habitats that can support them help to bring diversity and interest to the city.

Our parks and gardens are particular havens and support traditional woodland birds that frequently visit bird feeders and nest in the shrubs, bushes and mature trees. With both seeds and insects in abundance these birds do not have far to fly to get to their food sources. Tolerant of disturbance and regular management of these sites, typical species include the Robin *(Erithacus rubecula)*, Chaffinch *(Fringilla coelebs)*, Great tit *(Parus major)*, Blue tit *(Cyanistes caeruleus)* and Blackbird *(Turdus merula)*.

Common, but usually quite elusive species such as the Grey heron *(Ardea cinerea*) and Moorhen *(Gallinula chloropus)* can be observed next to brooks and ponds and appear much more tolerant of people and noise than their rural counterparts. The colourful Ring-necked parakeet *(Psittacula krameri)* has become the UK's most abundant naturalised parrot and can be heard or seen flying over the tall trees in parks whilst the migratory Swifts *(Apus apus)*, Swallows *(Hirundo rustica)* and House martins *(Delichon urbicum)* favour certain parts of the city to build nests and feed within the green spaces.

Some birds such as Swifts and Sparrows are associated with being urban as they breed almost entirely in or on buildings; others such as Pied wagtail *(Motacilla alba)* and Starlings *(Sturnus vulgaris)* are also highly dependent on buildings for nest sites.

Larger birds such as the Tawny owl *(Strix aluco)* and Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo)* favour mature trees in parks and wetlands whilst birds such as the Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus),* Skylark *(Alauda arvensis)* and Little Ringed Plover *(Charadrius dubius)* show how much our wetland reserves have matured to support these birds on the edge of the city.

Birds have largely learnt to adapt to changing conditions and to nest where it is considered safe to do so, using nesting material readily available within the urban environment such as traffic cones, telephone wiring, plastic bottles and ledges of traffic lights and windows. Perhaps, of more concern is the impact of building materials on our bird populations. Over 100 million birds are estimated to be killed in the UK alone each year by flying into glass. Birds cannot "see" glass windows unless it is treated with a UV coating which changes the colour wavelength and enables birds to avoid impacts. The design of the building however, remains unaltered to the human eye and appears as "normal" transparent glass.

1.2 PRIORITY BIRD SPECIES

Leicester supports a number of birds that are considered of conservation concern. The Red List criteria includes species that are globally threatened, species showing a decline of at least 50% in the UK breeding population in the last 25 years, or species showing a contraction of at least a 50% in their UK breeding range in the last 25 years.

The Amber List criteria include species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe, species showing a decline of between 25-50% in the UK breeding population in the last 25 years, or species showing a contraction of at between 25-50% in their UK breeding range in the last 25 years." Additional priority species are those noted under the NERC Act 2006 which have also suffered serious decline in recent decades or Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981)

Species Group	Taxon group	Taxon name	Common name	Status
Vertebrates	Bird	*Tyto alba*	Barn owl	Sch 1
Vertebrates	Bird	*Branta leucopsis*	Barnacle Goose	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	Black-headed Gull	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Phoenicurus ochruros*	Black Redstart	Sch 1, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Botaurus stellaris stellaris*	Bittern	NERC, Sch 1, Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Fringilla montifringilla*	Brambling	Sch 1
Vertebrates	Bird	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata*	Bullfinch	NERC
Vertebrates	Bird	*Cuculus canorus canorus*	Common Cuckoo	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Prunella modularis occidentalis*	Dunnock (Hedge Accentor)	NERC, Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Turdus pilaris*	Fieldfare	Sch 1, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Bucephala clangula*	Goldeneye	Sch 1, Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Locustella naevia naevia*	Grasshopper Warbler	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Motacilla cinerea*	Grey wagtail	Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Larus argentatus argenteus*	Herring Gull	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Delichon urbicum*	House Martin	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Falco tinnunculus*	Kestrel	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Alcedo atthis*	Kingfisher	Sch 1, Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Passer domesticus domesticus*	House Sparrow	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Vanellus vanellus*	Lapwing	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Charadrius dubius*	Little Ringed Plover	Sch 1
Vertebrates	Bird	*Larus fuscus*	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Dendrocopos minor comminutus*	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Anas platyrhynchos*	Mallard	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Parus palustris palustris/dresseri*	Marsh Tit	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Turdus viscivorus*	Mistle thrush	Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Cygnus olor*	Mute Swan	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Haematopus ostralegus*	Oystercatcher	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Falco peregrinus*	Peregrine Falcon	Sch 1
Vertebrates	Bird	*Anser brachyrhynchus*	Pink-footed Goose	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Aythya ferina*	Pochard	Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Emberiza schoeniclus schoeniclus*	Reed Bunting	NERC, Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Milvus milvus*	Red Kite	Sch 1
Vertebrates	Bird	*Turdus iliacus*	Redwing	Sch 1, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Asio flammeus*	Short-Eared Owl	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Alauda arvensis arvensis*	Sky Lark	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Turdus philomelos clarkei*	Song Thrush	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Muscicapa striata striata*	Spotted Flycatcher	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*	Starling	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Apus apus*	Swift	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Strix aluco*	Tawny Owl	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Anas crecca*	Teal	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Passer montanus montanus*	Tree Sparrow	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Mareca penelope*	Wigeon	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Parus montanus kleinschimdti*	Willow Tit	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	Willow Warbler	Amber
Vertebrates	Bird	*Scolopax rusticola*	Woodcock	Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Lullula arborea arborea*	Wood Lark	NERC, Sch 1
Vertebrates	Bird	*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*	Wood Warbler	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Motacilla flava flavissima*	Yellow Wagtail	NERC, Red
Vertebrates	Bird	*Emberiza citrinella citrinella*	Yellowhammer	NERC, Red

1.3 NESTING BIRDS

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and are given additional protection whilst they are actively nesting or roosting. Section 1 of this Act, makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, and to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built.

It is also an offence to take or destroy any wild bird eggs.
Bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act receive extra protection. The Act states that 'it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed in Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at (or near) a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird'. The maximum penalty for each offence in the Magistrates' Court is a £5000 fine and/or six months imprisonment and a £5000 fine and two years imprisonment in the Crown Court.

1.4 WILD BIRDS AND LEGISLATION

The Habitat & Species Regulations (2017) Section 10 has largely superceded original requirements in the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC 2) which set out to maintain and restore the populations of all naturally occurring wild bird species present in the EU at a level that will ensure their long term survival

The directive requires that Member States do more than simply prevent the further deterioration of these species and habitat types. They must also undertake **positive management** measures to ensure their populations are maintained at, or restored to, a favourable conservation status throughout their natural range within the EU. Favourable conservation status can be described as a situation where a habitat type or species is prospering (in both quality and extent/population) and has good prospects to do so in future as well.

Section 10 of the Regulations (Duties under wild bird habitat) has updated this requirement and state "Local Authorities (and others) are required "To help preserve, maintain and re-establish habitats for wild birds" including by means of upkeep, management and creation of such habitat …"

This is a statutory requirement in accordance with the NERC Act (2006) for all statutory agencies including the service areas within the Local authority to have regard to biodiversity in undertaking their duties. The actions for management of key habitats referred to in this document should be cross-referenced to minimise those practices that may impact negatively on wild birds and to promote good practice and optimise the creation and management of habitats to support wild birds.

Species Action Plans for the following birds are provided which specify additional opportunities to promote the conservation status in addition to the above:

- Black redstart *(Phoenicurus ochruros)*
- Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)*
- Swifts *(Apus apus)*

2. Black Redstart

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Black redstart *(Phoenicurus ochruros)* is a member of the “Old World” flycatcher and is similar in size and shape to a Robin. The name redstart originates from the Saxon red steort which means red tail – the male has a striking bright chestnut rump and tail and the female is a paler chestnut.

The main population of Black redstarts is concentrated in London, the West Midlands and the coast of Norfolk and Suffolk. It is, however, likely to be under-recorded and although there have been infrequent historical records, was noted more regularly in Leicester approximately five years ago by local bird specialists monitoring Peregrine falcon activity in the city. It is estimated that up to three breeding pairs have previously been identified in Leicester.

The Black redstart is a rare breeder in the UK with an estimated population of only 80 to 120 pairs making it one of the rarest breeding birds. It is estimated that one to three breeding pairs have been identified in Leicester

2.2 KEY HABITATS

The species breeds in a range of habitats but has become known as the “Bomb Site” bird due to its association during and after World War II when it largely bred on bomb sites in central London.

It favours areas that are characterised by sparse vegetation and rocky, craggy terrain. The frequency and convenience of nest sites in walls or roofs of buildings has enabled the species to adapt to urban surroundings where buildings have replaced the rocky crags. The presence of waste land colonised by weed species with areas of bare, undisturbed soils and an ample supply of song posts at least 20 m above the ground has allowed the Black redstart to colonise cities across Europe.

In particular, areas around railways, canals, warehouses and large buildings have been preferred by this species compared to the leafy suburbs, parks and other landscaped areas. Their diet has been found to be rich in midges and other invertebrates associated with slow-moving watercourses such as canals.

2.3 THREATS

The main factor associated with decline or threatened decline of this species is due to the large-scale development of city centre sites as part of the redevelopment and regeneration in the city. While this is supported in terms of economic development and prosperity for the city, it also means a loss of the types of habitat, namely brownfield or open-mosaic habitats.

This, together with the difficulty of surveying and finding the species combined with the very low breeding density within city centres means that the presence of the species may often go un-noticed and could be un-planned for unless active conservation work is in place to safeguard the species.

2.4 CURRENT STATUS

The Black redstart is afforded full protection as a Schedule 1 breeding species under the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended and is also listed as a Red Data Book species. It is also on Appendix II of the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife & Natural Habitats as amended.
A total of 64 records for Leicester and the immediate area have been recorded between 2007 and 2017 with most observations of males singing between April and June 2014-2016 on certain roof-tops in the city centre.

2.5 USEFUL INFORMATION

- Links to websites to manage and value wetland areas
  https://www.blackredstarts.org.uk/pages/sitesurvey.html

2.6 DISTRIBUTION OF BLACK REDSTARTS IN LEICESTER

Source: Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre 2020

BLACK REDSTART ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of the Black restart	Prioritise the creation and/or enhancement of green/brown roofs to support Black redstarts in target areas where previously recorded	2020-2025	Planning, Nat Con
	Create a minimum of 20 brown/green roof sites across the city centre and environs specifically for Black redstart conservation using a third of suitable roof space or minimum of $5m^2$ x $5m^2$ on new build sites	2020 - 2025	Planning, Nat Con
	Identify inner city schools within target areas that may have suitable buildings to create brown roofs. Identify potential grant sources and create 5 brown roofs	2020 - 2025	Sustainability, LRWT
Work with landowners to review temporary/permanent use of brownfield sites to encourage use of natural habitat and create site-specific management plans to inform	Identify key habitat for retention and enhancement as a brownfield site owned by large landowners e.g. Network Rail (XX m^2)	2025	Nat Con, LROS

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Provide generic guidance on the creation and establishment of green and brown roofs suitable to support this species	Update council and partner webpages to provide advice to developers, planners and private landowners	2020	Nat Con

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Establish status of Black redstarts in Leicester and key target areas for actions	Update 2014/16 surveys to inform on current status and locations	2021	Nat Con, LROS
Monitor brown roofs and nest box use by Black redstarts	Annual survey of sites to review and update	On-going	Nat Con, LROS

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Organise an event with partners specifically on Birds and Buildings – link with other Species Action Plans for urban birds	Organise 1 x event aimed at planners, developers, council and private landowners	2022	Nat Con, LROS
Promote good practice and highlight good case studies through range of media	Identify 3 key case studies which show good practice and promote widely	On-going	Nat Con
Work with partners to promote good practice and publish on webpages – link to relevant species action plans	Promote good practice in newsletters, social media and TV, radio and written articles	On-going	Nat Con, LROS

3. Pergrine Falcon

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Peregrine is a large and powerful falcon. It has long, broad, pointed wings and a relatively short tail. It is blue-grey above, with a blackish top of the head and an obvious black 'moustache' that contrasts with its white face. Its breast is finely spotted. It is swift and agile and catches most of its prey in flight.

In certain parts of the UK, they suffer illegal killing from gamekeepers and landowners, and are a target for collectors of their egg and young. Better legal protection and control of pesticides (which indirectly poisoned birds) have helped the population to recover considerably from a low in the 1960s.

Peregrines do not build a nest as such but make a shallow scrape in stones or debris where the female normally lays a clutch of three or four eggs in late March or April at 2-3 day intervals. Both birds share the incubation, which begins with the last or penultimate egg, and takes approximately 32 days.

The chicks hatch over a period of a couple of days. Most of the brooding and feeding of the small young is carried out by the female, while the male hunts to supply the food. After the first couple of weeks, the female shares the hunting and allows the male to feed and incubate the chicks.

The young fledge at around 40 days but are still dependent on their parents for two or more months. During this time, the adult Peregrines teach the young to hunt and handle prey in flight. Less than a third of Peregrines reach breeding age but those that do can expect to live 7 or more years. The oldest known Peregrine was over 21 years old, identified through ringing data.

3.2 KEY HABITATS

Peregrines are very territorial, and the size of the territory is usually determined by the abundance of food. In an urban environment their territories are likely to be smaller due to the amount of prey available; mainly feral pigeons. They have been known to feed on species ranging in size from Goldcrest to Grey Heron.

Their natural environment is mountain or moorland uplands on craggy rocks, or sea cliffs. Recently, they have adapted well and now high-rise buildings and other constructions such as hotels and churches are used as nest sites.

Peregrines require tall buildings in a city centre to view their surrounds – both for prey and other predators which include Peregrines wanting to establish or take over territories. In Leicester, the Peregrines have several favourite buildings from which to view their nest and surrounds

3.3 THREATS

The following factors could impact on the conservation status of this species in an urban environment

- Collisions with glass used in building construction – birds unable to see glass.
- Illegal persecution due to egg collecting – which does occur in urban areas where sites are not under good surveillance
- Pollution, emissions and poor air quality which could impact on their prey and bio-accumulate
- Re-development of buildings to include previously un-occupied buildings or to change to an alternate use which may increase disturbance from noise or lighting
- Maiden flights of fledgling birds may result in road kill
- Disturbance to territory from other raptors seeking food or used to control “pest” species such as feral pigeons

3.4 CURRENT STATUS

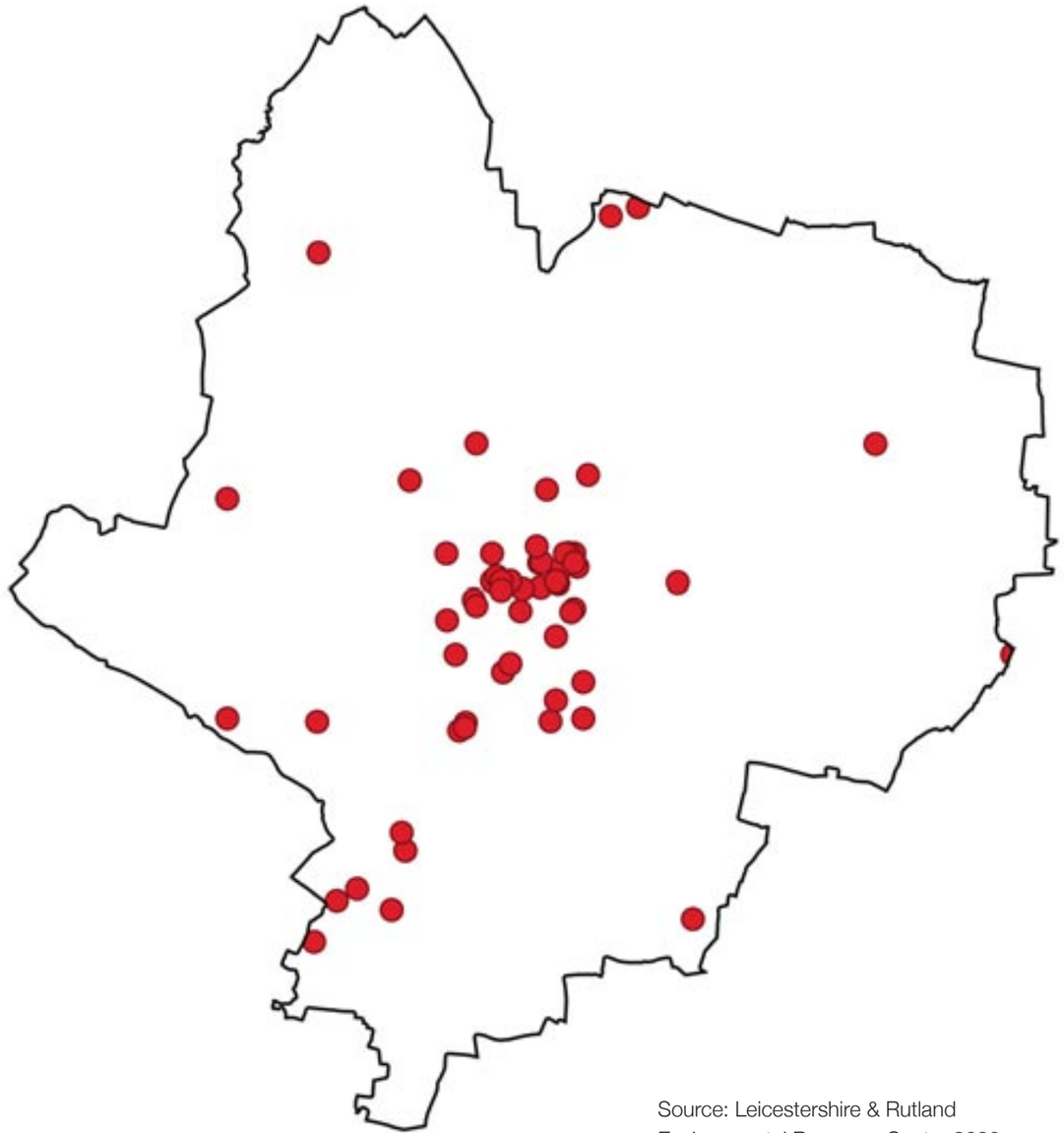
Peregrines have been recorded in Leicester since the 1970s and were observed around the University of Leicester campus taking advantage of some of the tallest buildings such as the Attenborough building constructed from 1968-70. The nearby Welford Road Cemetery and city centre also proved good foraging grounds, but the Peregrine seemed to have disappeared from the late 1990s until it began to be regularly spotted at the former Council offices at New Walk.

Since then a total of 280 records for Leicester and the immediate area have been recorded between 2006 and 2019. In 2014 it was proven that a pair bred on a derelict building in the city centre and moved to another site in 2016, possible due to disturbance. In 2017, they moved to a purpose-built nesting box located at Leicester Cathedral. Although most of the sightings are centred on Leicester and in particular the Cathedral and a nucleus of sites in the inner-city associated with tall buildings, there is also a reasonable distribution of sightings on the outer areas of the city which may be associated with their hunting areas, juveniles and other birds passing through.

3.5 LEGAL STATUS

In the UK the Peregrine Falcon is afforded full protection as a Schedule 1 breeding species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). It is also listed as a Red Data Book species and is on Appendix II of the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, 1979.
The UK conservation status of Peregrine is green since 2009, previously Amber (1996-2008).

3.6 DISTRIBUTION OF PEREGRINE FALCONS IN LEICESTER



Source: Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre 2020

3.7 PEREGRINE FALCON ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of the Peregrine falcon	Review and secure a suitable maintenance programme of raptor platforms through Planning conditions on new-builds	2020-2025	Planning, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Provide support, advice and information to all sites where Peregrine platforms been constructed	Contact sites where platforms been installed with agreement from landowners, check for use and update/inform landowners of the Project	2022	Nat Con, LROS
Produce interpretative material about Peregrines appropriate to target audiences	Update LROS and council webpages, produce case study of project and publish on website	2021	LROS, Nat Con

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Set up research group to identify Projects and seek out Universities in the Midlands interested in research	Organise 1 major research project to be undertaken	2022	Nat Con, LROS
Maintain and review species data held locally and at local record office. Update Species Alert maps	Review species data and update Species Alert maps to help prioritise target areas for conservation work	On-going	Nat Con, LRERC

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Organise a schedule of events for general public to have access to observe and learn about Peregrines	Organise 1 x event aimed at planners, developers, council and private landowners	2022	Nat Con, LROS
Promote good practice and highlight good case studies through range of media	Organise monthly Peregrine Watch at Cathedral Square, advertise on website and in Wild About Leicester	On-going	LROS
Seek Crowd-funding to support continuation of Project	Apply for funding/sponsorship opportunities to support	2022	Nat Con, LROS
Seek maximum publicity if Peregrines nesting at Cathedral	Write two press articles to inform public of Peregrine eggs and update when fledge to encourage media interest at local and regional level	2021-2025	LROS, Nat Con

4. Swifts

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Swifts *(Apus apus)* are the black, sickle-winged birds that characteristically wheel at speed high in the summer sky, readily identified by their frenzied fast wing beats between long glides. They often make high pitched single note calls in flight, hence the old country name of Devil Screechers, but they aren't noisy on the nest.

Over-wintering in Africa, the birds arrive in early May and depart in early August. Swifts usually nest in colonies, but this depends on the availability of nest sites. Swifts will breed from their second year and very little material is used for the nest which is glued together with saliva. They lay two or three eggs, and these are incubated for up to 20 days.

The young usually fledge at about six weeks old. They are fed food balls containing approximately 300 insects every hour or so although nesting sites are not necessarily close by to areas likely to support high numbers of insects and as Swifts will fly a reasonable distance to good foraging grounds, there is no direct association between nest ing sites and foraging areas. On average, individual Swifts may return for up to six years, firstly as non-breeding individuals, and only two years for successful rearing of replacements.

4.2 KEY HABITATS

Their natural tree, cave and cliff nest sites are rare in Britain, and so the birds depend almost exclusively on manmade sites such as houses, typically high up under the eaves, in ventilators and other available cavities. Most nest sites are at least five metres above ground and all have a drop to allow the birds to pick up speed as they leave the nest.

They are highly adapted to flying and flying at speed. They feed, sleep and even mate while in the air. Although not related to swallows or house martins, many of their habits and reliance on man-made structures are similar Swifts pair for life and are likely to return to the same nest sites year after year. Nestlings will also return to the vicinity where they were reared. Thus, where there are swifts nesting, it is likely to be a local population with links to that locality going back many years. Swifts will use both old and new buildings.

4.3 THREATS

Modern building methods, changes in building regulations and better maintenance of properties all contribute to excluding swifts from their usual nesting places in roofs.

Over time, building regulations, particularly those governing efficiency, have meant that there are fewer spaces, if any, for swifts to nest in buildings. Even older buildings that may traditionally have supported nesting swifts may not be suitable any longer due to renovations or roof insulation adhering to modern building regulations, and the retro-fitting of insulation. If traditional sites are no longer available swifts may not breed at all.

4.4 CURRENT STATUS

- Between 1995 and 2015, the UK population declined by 51% and is now approximately 40 000 (Swift Partnership Project)
- Locally the records of Swifts have continued to be reported in several areas of Leicester where they have historically nested. These include areas of the West end, Tudor Road and parallel terraced streets, Fosse Road, Braunstone and Glenfrith.
- These sites are vulnerable as many houses are generally rented out and sometimes as buildings of multipleoccupancy with many tenants. Building regulations, increased insulation and roof repairs to ageing buildings mean niches that provided nests for Swifts are no longer in place
- The swift is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the eggs, young or nest of a swift whilst it is being built or in use. The Act allows for fines or prison sentences for every bird, egg or nest destroyed. There is no such legal protection for swift nest-sites in the non-breeding season, despite the bird being highly nest-site faithful

4.5 DISTRIBUTION OF SWIFTS IN LEICESTER

4.6 SWIFT ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of the Swift	Target public buildings within Swift Alert Areas and arrange installation of 21 Swift boxes/ yr at key sites (installed in groups of 3)	2020-2025	Nat Con, Planning
	Install 50/yr Swift boxes via Planning conditions in Site Alert areas	On-going	Nat Con, Planning

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Update Swift Guidance documents for planners, and developers on legal status, survey and mitigation requirements	Update advisory leaflets for planners and landowners and publish on website	2021	SPP, LRWT

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Identify and map Swift Alert areas to show records of nesting Swifts in the city and 250 m^2 radius	Review species data and update Species Alert maps to help prioritise target areas for conservation work	On-going	Nat Con, LRERC
	Organise training event for volunteers and allocate survey areas	2021	SPP
	Support volunteers, collate data and map results	2021-2025	SPP, LRERC

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Arrange advice and training to key Service areas responsible for buildings	Organise and deliver training to Building Control, E&BS, and Housing areas to raise awareness and contribute to increase in habitat and conservation	2021	SPP
Link to other Swift Conservation initiatives	Support and work with Swift project within Soar Wreake Living Landscape area	2021	LRWT
Organise and deliver a schedule of events to help inform local communities and residents on how to help	Organise an event in a Site Alert area to link in with the local community e.g. Tudor Rd Housing Services and Castlemead School	On-going	SPP, Nat Con
Install a Swift-cam at a known Swift nest site and link to webpage	Work with developers and/or LRWT within Waterside area to install webcam and feed live footage on website	2021	SPP, LRWT
Promote via Making Wildlife Count publications and annual report	Include World Swift Day and UK Swift Awareness Week Jun-July	2021-2025	SPP

Mammals

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Leicester supports a wide range of mammals from top predators such as the Red fox *(Vulpes vulpes)* and Badger *(Meles meles)* to the smallest of our mammals such as the Pygmy shrew *(Sorex minutus)* and Harvest mouse *(Micromys minutus)*.

Many of the mammals are heard or leave signs behind to show their presence, but they are seldom seen. This is because many are nocturnal and have adapted to foraging and hunting during the hours of darkness, largely to avoid being killed or injured. The exception to this is the Grey squirrel *(Sciurus carolinensis)* which is seen across our Parks and Open Spaces and is a frequent visitor to many gardens, taking advantage of bird feeders and discarded food.

Other mammals have similarly learnt how to forage and find food not normally as available in the countryside. These include scavengers such as the Red fox, Brown rat *(Rattus norvegicus)*, House mouse *(Mus musculus)* and Wood mouse *(Apodemus sylvaticus*) as well as the much loved Hedgehog *(Erinaceus europaeus)* thanks to supplementary food and rescues.

Voles and shrews are likely to be severely under-recorded in the city. Their secretive lives in Parks, gardens and road verges often go un-noticed, but they continue to be an important part of the food chain. The presence of predators such as the Tawny owl and Kestrel whose diet relies heavily on these species is evidence of their continued presence across the green network.

Certain species such as the Water vole *(Arvicola amphibius)* have recently re-colonised parts of the city where they had all but disappeared and the Otter *(Lutra lutra)* having been re-introduced during the 1990s into parts of the East and West Midlands, has now re-colonised every catchment in Leicestershire and been recorded using watercourses in Leicester since 2009.

Rabbits ***(Oryctolagus cuniculus)*** including the infamous black rabbits found at Aylestone are frequently seen on the outer edges of the city, although Brown hare *(Lepus europaeus)* has seldom been recorded and continues to be associated with a more rural environment – recorded only at Hamilton and Ashton Green. The extremely secretive Muntjac deer (Muntiacus reevesi) is also a relatively recent and now frequently recorded and has successfully used the old railway lines and woodland cover to inhabit sites throughout the city including those such as Castle Gardens, Rally Park and St Marys Open Space.

Perhaps with the threat of climate change, those mammal species most at risk are those adapted to hibernation such as the Hedgehog and Bats. Whilst the Hedgehog is recovering reasonable well in Leicester, Bats continue to be vulnerable to climate conditions which can impact on them coming out of hibernation at inappropriate periods during winter when food sources are limited. This species above all, is associated and reliant on made-made structures, mature trees and green space and much can be done to conserve and safeguard Bats associated with the habitat types.

1.2 PRIORITY MAMMAL SPECIES

Leicester supports a range of large and small mammals that are considered of conservation concern and should be given additional consideration in planning and development or maintenance of sites. None of the species are on the Red list, but the Otter is still considered “Near threatened” and many of the species are protected by both European and UK legislation.

All species in the table below are Priority species noted under the NERC Act (2006) because of their serious decline in recent decades.

Species Group	Taxon group	Taxon name	Common name	Status
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Meles Meles*	Badger	Protection of Badgers Act 1992
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Lepus europaeus*	Brown Hare	NERC
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Plecotus auritus*	Brown Long-eared bat	NERC, EPS, W&C Act 1981
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Micromys minutus*	Harvest Mouse	NERC
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Erinaceus europaeus*	Hedgehog	NERC
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Nyctalus noctula*	Noctule	NERC, ESP
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Lutra lutra*	Otter	NERC, ESP, Near threatened
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	Soprano Pipistrelle	NERC, ESP
Vertebrates	Mammal	*Arvicola amphibius*	Water Vole	NERC, ESP

1.3 PROTECTED MAMMAL STATUS

The species noted in the table below are mainly protected by the European Habitat & Species Regulations (2017) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended. It is expected that the UK will review wildlife legislation post-Brexit to avoid duplication and update according to the conservation status of the species.

Badgers are present and frequent throughout Leicester. The species and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Impact and losses to foraging habitat should also be considered under HMSO 06/2005 when considering planning applications.

Species Action Plans for the following species of mammals provide opportunities to promote the conservation status in addition to the above:

- Bats *(Chiroptera sp)*
- Hedgehog ***(Erinaceus europaeus)***
- Otter ***(Lutra lutra)***
- Water vole ***(Arvicola amphibius)***

2. Bats

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are 18 species of bats recorded in the UK of which 17 are breeding. Evidence has found that there continues to be an overall decline in bats generally which has given rise to their protected status.
Both the ecology of the species in terms of their restrictive habitat range, dependence on insects, ability and rate of reproduction and reliance on built or natural structures that may be vulnerable to change or loss has resulted in an increasingly vulnerable species. The predicted impacts of climate change may also alter their behaviour and that of their prey as well as their ability to hibernate or roost at certain sites due to risk of hypothermia or dehydration leading to death.

2.2 KEY HABITATS

All UK bats are insectivorous found in most habitats often feeding on the wing at dusk over hedgerows, rough grassland and wetland. They feed on airborne insects such as midges, caddisfly, mosquitoes, lacewings and small moths. Their habitats include woodland and woodland edges, wetlands and open water as well as pasture and meadow.

Bats frequent buildings and built structures in particular with both old and relatively recent buildings being occupied.

During the summer they will also roost under bridges, in caves or tunnels.
In the autumn/winter they will seek out alternative habitats in which to hibernate where they hope to be undisturbed, draft-free and a stable cool environment. These can also include deep within caves and tunnels as well as parts of buildings which they tend to favour and return annually

2.3 IMPACTS ON BAT SPECIES

The following factors are likely to lead to the death or injury of a bat or disturbance/destruction of their roost or habitat

- Loss, destruction and/or disturbance to roosts through toxic timber treatment chemicals or inappropriate roof lining which poisons the bats or traps them as they get caught in the lining;
- Inappropriate building practices that cause noise and vibration near to roosts e.g. repointing brickwork, repairing or replacing a roof, insulating or converting a loft, renovating, converting or demolishing a house;
- Cutting down or removing branches from a mature tree
- Inappropriate lighting – either in a roost or outside an entrance that deters bats entering or leaving the roost
- Loss of foraging habitat and fragmentation of insect-rich feeding habitat especially along hedgerows and watercourses
- Pesticide build-up from consuming insects as major part of diet leading to bio-accumulation in food chain
- Impacts of climate change causing bats to wake up during winter or food source impacted when temperatures low or excessive rainfall
- Widespread misunderstanding of legislation that protects bats which leads to the loss or damage of many roosts when consultation procedures are not carried out
- Injury from domestic cats

2.4 CURRENT STATUS

Ten of the 18 UK species of bats have been recorded in Leicester. The status of these bats is shown below

Species	Regional Status	Main Habitats	
		Feeding	Roosting
Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrelle pipistrelle*)	**Widespread and Common**	Woodland edge, hedgerows and gardens	Modern houses and built structures
Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellis pygmaeus*)	**Widespread and Common**	As above an associated with water	Modern houses and built structures
Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*)	**Uncommon**	Deciduous and mixed woodland	Modern houses and built structures
Brown Long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)	**Uncommon**	Deciduous and mixed woodland	Old houses, barns and tunnels
Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)	**Uncommon**	Rivers, steams, lakes and ponds	Bridges and tunnels
Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)	**Uncommon**	Deciduous and mixed woodland	Holes in trees
Brandt's Bat (*Myotis brandtii*)	**Rare/Uncommon**	Deciduous and mixed woodland	Buildings and houses
Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)	**Rare/Uncommon**	Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, deciduous and mixed woodland	Barns, churches, bridges and tunnels
Serotine (*Eptescius serotinus*)	**Rare/Uncommon**	Pasture, open woodland, tall hedgerows and suburban areas	Houses and older buildings
Grey Long-eared (*Plecotus austriacus*)	**Rare/migratory species**	Woodland and open meadow	Old houses, barns and tunnels
Nathusius Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)	**Rare/migratory species**	Ponds, lakes, watercourses, mixed woodland and parkland. Always near water	Buildings and trees

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2.5 LEGAL STATUS

All bats irrespective of their regional status are protected under the following legislation

- Schedule 5 Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981)
- Schedule 2 Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 (Amendments 2017)

2.6 DISTRIBUTION OF BATS IN LEICESTER

2.7 BAT ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of Bats	Protect all mature trees and standing deadwood and ensure that if felling or pruning is required that an appropriate bat survey is carried out	On-going	Planning, T&W
	Avoid loss of bat roosts wherever possible and ensure appropriate mitigation is implemented and completed under licence where required	On-going	Planning, Nat Con
	Plant or enhance 10km of hedgerows to provide good foraging habitat for bats – see link to Hedgerow HAP	2020-2025	Nat Con, Planning
	Create/enhance 2 ha of species-rich and rough grassland – see link to Grassland HAP	2020-2025	Parks
	Review policy on use of herbicide and pesticide to help support insects (links to Pollinator Strategy)	2020	Parks, Nat Con
Only light areas in appropriate places and base decisions on species and population size of bats present	Where lighting cannot be avoided ensure designed to minimise impact on wildlife and is below 1 lux	On-going	Planning, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Provide guidance for permitted development and/or where bat roosts identified which may impact on roosts from inappropriate building practices	Ensure works are carried out in accordance with NE and BCT guidelines or licence requirements	2020	Nat Con, Planning

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Collate records on number and distribution of bat roosts to inform on future management and advisory works	Collate all records from ecology consultants submitted with planning applications, record and send to LRERC	On-going	Nat Con, LRERC
Work with Bat Group to establish presence of roosts in city centre	Commission a series of annual surveys to help inform and provide advice	2021	Nat Con, Bat Group
Encourage work with colleges and university to further understanding of impacts of development on bats	Works with UoL Biodiversity Working Group to identify research projects to further understand mitigation techniques	2021-2025	Nat Con, UoL

3. Hedgehog

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Western European Hedgehog *(Erinaceus europaeus)* is easy to identify due to their unique appearance as being the only British mammal with spines. When alarmed, the species will roll itself into a tight ball so that the head and underside are protected by the layer of spines.

They have been voted the UK's favourite garden creature in a survey by the Royal Horticultural Society and the Wildlife Trusts, but they have suffered severe declines in numbers and are recognised as a priority species in need of conservation.

3.2 KEY HABITATS

Hedgehogs are found in nearly all lowland habitats, but are most abundant where grassland is close to woodland, scrub or hedgerows. Allotments, gardens and parks are particularly important for food and nesting where their main diet of caterpillars, beetles, slugs, earth worms and small mammals are abundant alongside undisturbed areas to sleep or hibernate. They will travel up to 3 km a night and have a home range of 10 – 30 ha.

Hedgehogs hibernate during the late autumn/winter in nests built from leaves and grass under hedgerows, or in old rabbit burrows and underneath compost heaps or sheds. The sleep is triggered by a drop in temperature which warns the hedgehog that food will be scarce. Milder autumn and winters has extended the breeding season from May to September and now young are born well into November. This, along with periods when hedgehogs wake from hibernation during warmer spells in winter (or when captive sometimes do not hibernate at all) and the birth of litters in late autumn has increased their vulnerability to survive over-winter.

3.3 IMPACTS ON SPECIES STATUS

The most important factors affecting species are:

- Road collisions with large numbers killed on our roads
- Loss of suitable habitat and the creation of barriers to dispersal
- Lack of habitat to hibernate and/or disturbance during hibernation
- Poisoning from slug pellets and pesticides
- Mowing and strimming of long grass causing injury
- Drowning in garden ponds
- Predation from Badgers, Foxes and Crows

3.4 CURRENT STATUS

Hedgehogs are found throughout the UK, but recent data considers the species has declined by 66% since 1995 with a population now estimated at approximately 522 000 based on data from improved grasslands and urban areas only.

The local status of Hedgehogs in Leicester is not known, but surveys have helped inform on the distribution of the species over the last 20 years with the last survey having been conducted in 2013 -14. The Hedgehog Rescue charity collates records in Leicestershire (including the City) that are present in gardens or that have been killed or injured on roads and since the City HOGWATCH survey in 2013 Hedgehog Rescue have submitted annual records of all hedgehogs taken into care and noting the reason why this was necessary. Other records are collated from observations from the public and/or reported on the local NatureSpot website.

3.5 LEGAL STATUS

Hedgehogs are partly protected by Schedule 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended. It is illegal to kill or trap without a licence. Their habitat is not protected.

3.6 DISTRIBUTION OF HEDGEHOGS IN LEICESTER

Source: Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre 2020

3.7 HEDGEHOG ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of Hedgehogs	Create ponds on 25% allotments and edible hedgerows on 50% allotments – see Allotment HAP	On-going	Nat Con, Std & Development
	Encourage wildlife-friendly gardens with features to support hedgehogs	On-going	Hedgehog Rescue, LRWT
	Plant or enhance 10km of hedgerows to provide good foraging habitat for bats – see link to Hedgerow HAP	2020-2025	Nat Con, Planning
	Create/enhance 2 ha of species-rich and rough grassland – see link to Grassland HAP	2020-2025	Parks
	Review policy on use of herbicide and pesticide to help support insects (links to Pollinator Strategy)	2020	Parks, Nat Con
	Connect gardens in new development with gaps in fence boards where hedgehogs locally recorded enforced with planning conditions	On-going	Planning, Nat Con

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Increase value of allotments, gardens and parks	Reduce cutting regime on mature hedgerows	On-going	Std & Development, Parks, LRWT
	Use conservation volunteers and hand tools to reduce impact or injury where hedgehog habitat present	On-going	Parks
	Check logs, bricks, and stone piles prior to removal if near to vegetation and/or prior to use on bonfire	On-going	Parks, Hedgehog Rescue
Encourage people to provide a hedgehog friendly environment in gardens and allotments	Work with partners Hedgehog Rescue and Mammal Group to produce leaflet and publish on website	2021	Nat Con, MG, Hedgehog Rescue

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Determine the status of hedgehogs in Leicester	Collate, analyse and evaluate current records of hedgehogs in Leicester	2021	MG
	Establish and run a Citizen Science project to record hedgehogs in Leicester	2021	Nat Con, MG, LRWT

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Use a selection of media sources to promote hedgehogs to a wider audience	Link to World Hedgehog Day – and specifically promote	2021-2025	Hedgehog Rescue, MG
Involve volunteers in making hedgehog boxes	Organise volunteers to make and help install 50 hedgehog boxes in suitable allotments and gardens	2022	Nat Con, MG
	Make 50 boxes annually and work with Hedgehog Rescue and MG to collate data on use of boxes– schedule into Making Wildlife Count	2023-2025	Nat Con, Hedgehog Rescue, MG
Develop awareness raising programme	Provide regular advice via media and target different seasons when most vulnerable	2021-2025	Hedgehog Rescue, MG
Set up Hedgehog Streets neat to allotments and large gardens	Create 4 Hedgehog Streets in established communities and/or new build with developers	2021	Nat Con, Hedgehog Rescue, MG
Organise and support Wildlife events and activities	Link in with annual wildlife events such as 30 Days Wild or similar and other events held by mammal organisations – 5 per year under review	On-going	Hedgehog Rescue, MG
Identify inner-city schools with secure ecology areas where hedgehog boxes and feeding stations could be set up and monitored	Identify 5 schools, provide advisory leaflets and organise visit from Hedgehog Rescue/MG	2021	Sustainability, Hedgehog Rescue

4. Otter

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Eurasian Otter *(Lutra lutra)* is one of our largest terrestrial mammals and considered a top predator in the food chain, but its survival has been precarious over the last 60 years with its demise attributed to the introduction of organo-pesticides in the 1960s. This poisoned fish populations – the main diet of the otter while at the same time otters numbers declined due to organised hunts and game-keeping control.

The Otter did however manage to survive naturally in some parts of Leicestershire and since Otters were reintroduced on watercourses in the Lower Trent Catchment, the numbers recorded since 1990 has risen with a significant increase recorded in the County in the last decade.

The Otter has now been recorded on the River Soar and Grand Union Canal in Leicester as well as many of the minor tributaries with both adults and their young observed or filmed on wildlife cameras close to reasonably built-up and populated areas of the city.

4.2 KEY HABITATS

The Otter exploits a range of habitats from large rivers, canals, reservoirs and lakes to small ponds and ditches. Their territory ranges from 40-70 km and they will readily travel 20-25 km over 24 hours. A reasonable quantity of their main food source – fish along with suitable places of refuge need to be present. These vary from large bankside trees with exposed roots to woody debris, scrub and bramble to lie-up in.

4.3 IMPACTS ON SPECIES STATUS

The most important factors affecting species are:

- Road collisions with more frequent killed on our roads
- Disease
- Development: loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat
- Pollution and poor water quality impacting on food sources
- Direct persecution
- Disturbance from increased levels of leisure activity and adjacent land uses
- Mink and illegal crayfish traps

4.4 CURRENT STATUS

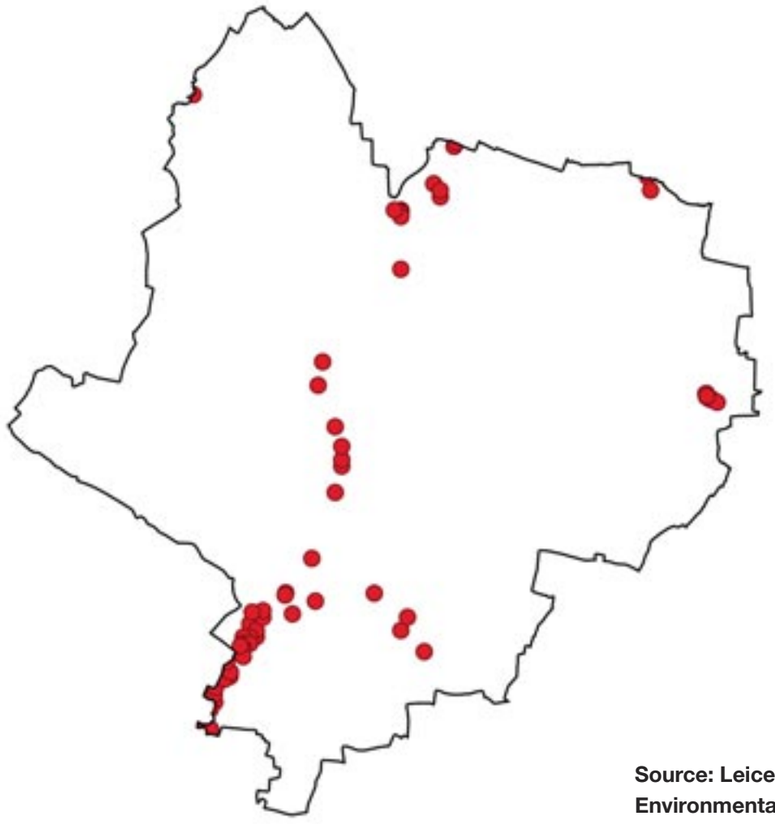
National surveys conducted by the Environment Agency in 2003 and 2010 determined the status and distribution of this species. Following the re-introduction programme, regular monitoring by local recorders together with a number of student projects have helped to identify the key hotspots where Otter activity is regularly recorded.

The Soar and Grand Union canal continue to be the main focus of Otter activity with the species regularly sighted or their spraints found. Fortunately few road casualties have been recorded in Leicester compared to Leicestershire, but there is still concern at casualties from barges and other leisure-craft as the Soar becomes more popular.

4.5 LEGAL STATUS

The Otter is a priority species in the UK BAP and classified as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List (2004). They are fully protected under the European Habitats & Species Regulations 1994 (as amended) and Section 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

4.6 DISTRIBUTION OF OTTERS IN LEICESTER



Source: Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre 2020

4.7 OTTER ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of Otters	All development to avoid destruction or damage to watercourses and bankside habitat and to provide adequate mitigation/compensation for losses	On-going	Nat Con, Std & Development
	Design and implement NFM scheme at Aylestone Meadows and Thurnby Lodge Nature Area to enhance habitat for Otters	2020	Econ Dev Landscape, Nat Con
	Implement NFM scheme at Ashton Green as part of wider GI between LCC and developers	2022	Planning, Nat Con, Econ Dev
	Identify programme of sites along watercourses where NFM can be implemented (see Rivers & Brooks and Wetlands HAPs) to link to NRN	2020-2025	Nat Con, EA, SCP, Soar & GUC

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Develop guidance and strategies on appropriate management to optimise biodiversity value for otters	Produce Management Plans for new sites at Thurnby Lodge Nature Area, Aylestone Meadows (River Biam)	2020	Nat Con, Parks
	Complete Riverside Management Plan to co-ordinate management of River corridor from Aylestone to Birstall	2022	Nat Con, Parks
Programme in sensitive conservation management of riparian habitats along Soar	Review from baseline data, map all areas add into management schedule	2021	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
	Identify and agree works undertaken by Parks (GM and LEV), develop programme of work to enhance biodiversity and use by Otters 1 km/yr	2021	Parks, Nat Con
Review conservation management of brooks under council and EA responsibility and agree appropriate management to conserve and enhance wildlife value	Update Watercourses Management Guidance and schedule annual programme of work to be phased in across the city (5 km/yr)	2021 -	Flood

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Establish and monitor extent and range of Otters in Leicester	Collate records, survey Soar and GUC. Map all records and share with LRERC	2021	MG, Nat Con
	Collate records, survey Rothley Brook and minor Brooks in Leicester. Map all records and share with LRERC	2023	MG, Nat Con
Monitor locations and causes of death	Collect all Otter corpses for post-mortem analysis where practical. Continue current arrangement with EA and MG	On-going	EA, MG

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Provide generic guidance to planners, and developers on habitat creation and means of dispersal to wider network to help conserve this species	Update Council and partner websites to provide generic guidance and cross-reference to other relevant websites	2020	Nat Con, Planning
Provide a programme of training and guidance for land managers and information for community groups	Work with Mammal Group, EA and Wildlife Trust to agree programme of training to local communities, volunteers to help with surveys and conservation work	2021	MG, LRWT, Parks
	Work with Mammal Group, EA and Wildlife Trust to agree programme of training to land managers and link to NFM and ELMs	2021	EA, MG, LRWT

5. Water Vole

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Water vole *(Arvicola amphibius)* is the largest British vole and is rat sized and often mistaken for the Brown rat. Its appearance is slightly different – usually darker fur, a rounder body and a much shorter, chubby face with small eyes and ears that are close to the body rather than protruding.

It is a good swimmer and is often seen either swimming with its head just above the water line or sat on banks nibbling vegetation. It is a fully protected species due to its severe decline with an estimate 94% loss since the mid-1980s due to predation and habitat fragmentation although recent reports suggest that the population is now stable.

5.2 KEY HABITATS

In the UK the Water vole is primarily riparian and usually occurs within 2 m of water. It prefers slow-flowing rivers, streams, canals and marshes with dense vegetation that can provide protection from predators.
The species needs a diverse range of vegetation that is available throughout the year to survive. This mainly comprises of reeds and grasses, but they will eat bark from willow in winter months when other vegetation is not available.

The species is best found in areas where watercourses have steeper earth banks that enable them to burrow into and create a series of chambers that can be above or below water level or some distance from the bank. The burrows provide a range of needs – maternity burrows away from the water to rear young and those under water to directly hide or escape from predators.

5.3 IMPACTS ON SPECIES STATUS

The most important factors affecting species are:

- Predation from American mink in water vole locations
- Loss and fragmentation of habitat with culvert construction and concrete channels
- Changes or inappropriate land management of ditches and river banks
- Unfavourable hydrological regimes – with severe flooding
- Pollution events

5.4 CURRENT STATUS

The species is on the IUCN Red list with an estimated British population of 132 000.

The status of Water voles in Leicestershire is largely unknown with the last survey having been undertaken in 2002/03 which found only six significant colonies of water voles while the last survey in Leicester was undertaken in 1998 and found no water voles to be present in any of the watercourses where the species had been previously recorded.

There have been 21 records of Water vole recorded in Leicester and the surrounding areas since 2000. The species all but disappeared from the city during the 1990s largely due to engineering flood works which removed the earth banks and replaced them with walls which isolated populations and their habitat from nearby areas. Mink predation also wiped out colonies that were unable to recover. However, Water voles have recently been re-discovered in Leicester and the most recent records are for the Aylestone area recorded by fully qualified ecology consultants where optimum habitat is present along the river banks and within the ditch networks of the Local Nature Reserve.

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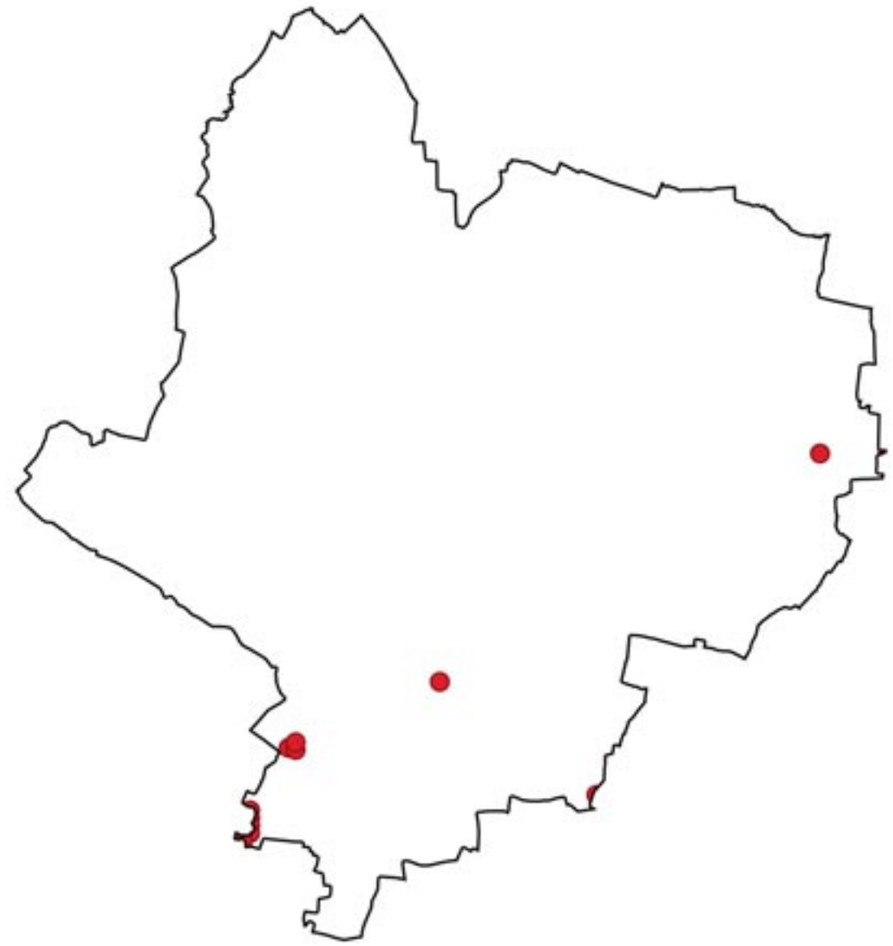
5.5 LEGAL STATUS

The Water vole is fully protected under UK and European legislation - Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) as amended and the Habitats & Species Regulations (2017) which protect both the species being killed or injured and its habitat being damaged or destroyed except under licence.

5.6 DISTRIBUTION OF WATER VOLES IN LEICESTER



5.7 WATER VOLE ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for joint projects and partnership working with internal and external stakeholders to create or restore priority habitats and recover important species of animals, plants and fungi
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Habitat Creation/Species Recovery			
Create, restore and enhance habitat across Leicester to create more and better connected habitat to support species recovery of Water voles	All development to avoid destruction or damage to watercourses and bankside habitat and to provide adequate mitigation/compensation for losses	On-going	Planning, Nat Con, Std & Development
	Design and implement NFM scheme at Aylestone Meadows and Thurnby Lodge Nature Area to enhance habitat for Water voles	2020	Econ Dev Landscape, Nat Con
	Implement NFM scheme at Ashton Green as part of wider GI between LCC and developers	2022	Planning, Nat Con, Econ Dev
	Identify programme of sites along watercourses where NFM can be implemented (see Rivers & Brooks and Wetlands HAPs) to link to NRN	2020-2025	Nat Con, EA, SCP, Soar & GUC

- Create, conserve and enhance all habitats wherever possible and increase the biodiversity value of designated and/or priority habitats back to favourable status
- Conserve protected and priority species by highlighting threats and issues, agree targets and actions to address them and help with their recovery

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Management/Advice			
Develop guidance and strategies on appropriate management to optimise biodiversity value for otters	Produce Management Plans for new sites at Thurnby Lodge Nature Area, Aylestone Meadows (River Biam), Cardinal's Meadow	2020	Nat Con, Parks
	Complete Riverside Management Plan to co-ordinate management of River corridor from Aylestone to Birstall	2022	Nat Con, Parks
Programme in sensitive conservation management of riparian habitats along Soar	Review from baseline data, map all areas add into management schedule	2021	Stds & Development, Parks, Nat Con
	Identify and agree works undertaken by Parks (GM and LEV), develop programme of work to enhance biodiversity and use by Otters 1 km/yr	2021	Parks, Nat Con
Review conservation management of brooks under council and EA responsibility and agree appropriate management to conserve and enhance wildlife value	Update Watercourses Management Guidance and schedule annual programme of work to be phased in across the city (5 km/yr)	2021 -	Flood

- Monitor and review biodiversity trends in Leicester to and report on progress and achievements at a national and local level

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Monitoring/Research			
Establish and monitor extent and range of Water voles in Leicester	Collate records, survey Soar and GUC and main tributaries. Map all records and share with LRERC	2021	MG, Nat Con
	Collate records, survey and monitor main lakes, large ponds and minor water courses in Leicester. Map all records and share with LRERC	2023	MG, Nat Con
Monitor known populations	Monitor river Soar and record any expansion in population dispersal	2021	MG, Nat Con

- Champion and promote Leicester's biodiversity using a range of publicity to fully engage with stakeholders at all levels
- Support and provide inspiration for conservation projects, events and activities involving the local communities

Objective	Actions	Achieved by	Lead
Engagement			
Provide generic guidance to planners, and developers on habitat creation and means of dispersal to wider network to help conserve this species	Update Council and partner websites to provide generic guidance and cross-reference to other relevant websites	2020	Nat Con, Planning
Provide a programme of training and guidance for land managers and information for community groups	Work with Mammal Group, EA and Wildlife Trust to agree programme of training to local communities, volunteers to help with surveys and conservation work (e.g. Shared Waters, LEV)	2021	MG, LRWT, Parks
	Work with Mammal Group, EA and Wildlife Trust to agree programme of training to land managers and link to NFM and ELMs	2021	EA, MG, LRWT

Leicester's **Biodiversity Action Plan**

Acronyms

BAP Biodiversity Action Plan

BNG Biodiversity Net Gain

BOM Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping

CHCP Castle Hill Country Park

Con Conservation

CPD Continued Professional Development

CRT Canal & River Trust

EA Environment Agency

ELMS Environmental Land Management Scheme

FOGS Friends of Groups

GCN Great Crested Newt

GI Green Infrastructure

GIN Green Infrastructure Network

GUC Grand Union Canal

HAP Habitat Action Plan

HEG Hedgerow Evaluation Grade

HR Hedgehog Rescue

JPK Japanese Knotweed

LBAP Local Biodiversity Action Plan

LCC Leicester City Council

LEV Leicester Environmental Volunteers

LNR Local Nature Reserve

LRERC Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Resource Centre

LROS Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society

LRWT Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

LWS Local Wildlife Site

MG Mammal Group

Nat Con Nature Conservation

NE Natural England

NERC Natural Environment & Rural Community

PUGS Park User Groups

RPZ Root Protection Zone

SAP Species Action Plan

SCP Soar Catchment Partnership

SCT Swift Conservation Trust

SPP Swift Partnership Project

SuDS Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes

TPO Tree Preservation Order

T&W Trees and Woodlands

UoL University of Leicester

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission
13th October

Connecting Leicester
Transforming Cities Fund updates

1. Great Central Way
2. Granby Street and St Georges St

Leicester City Council

Appendix C

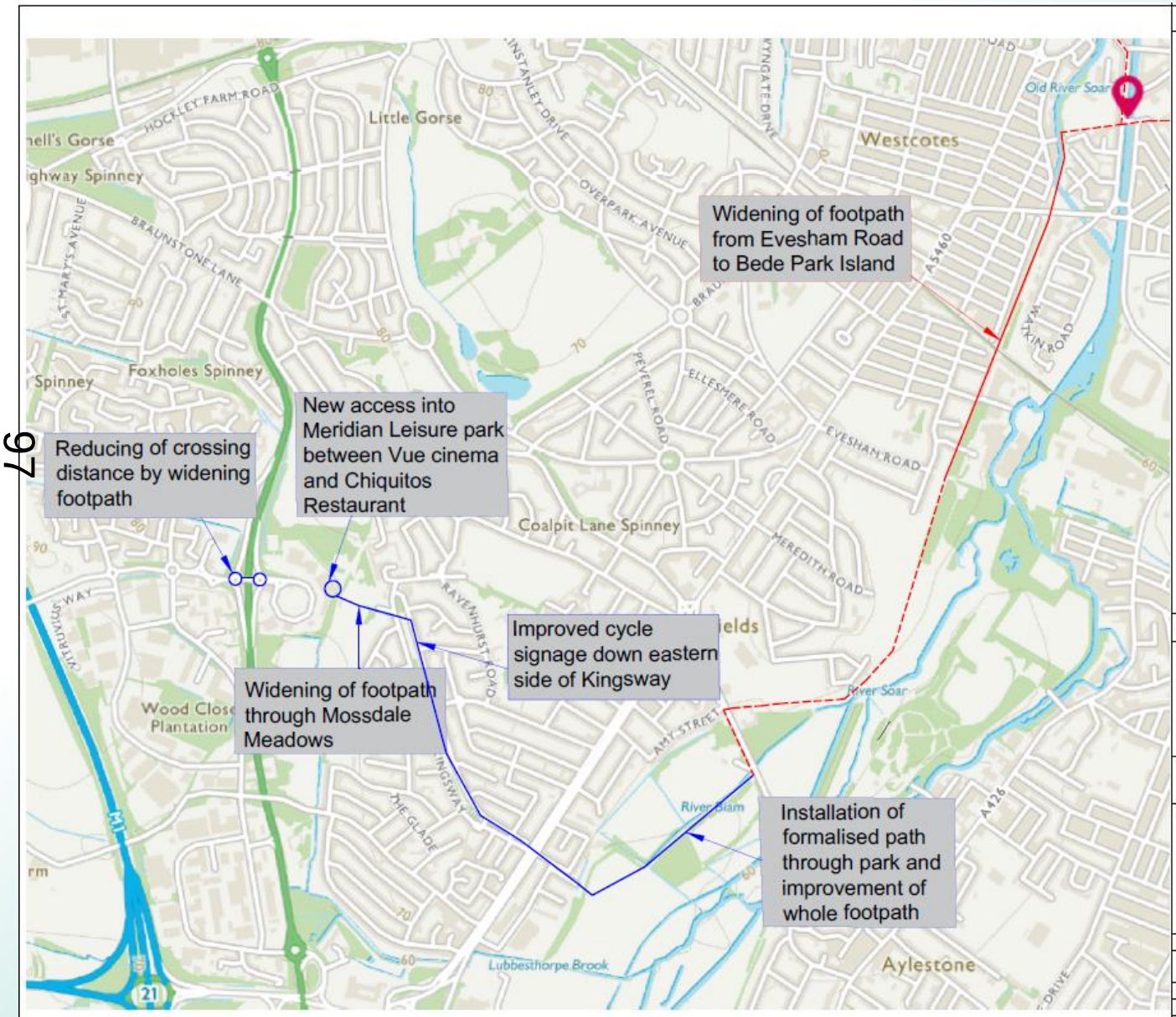
Great Central Way

Scheme divided up into two phases:

- Phase 1 – works to Great Central Way between Evesham Road and Bede Park. These works commenced on site Sept 2020 and were completed March 2021.
- Phase 2 – links from Kingsway to Meridian Leisure Park
- Scheme funded by the Transforming Cities Fund, overall budget is c£1.2m

Leicester City Council

Great Central Way – Phase 1 & 2 overview plan



Notes

Key-

Phase 1

Phase 2

Existing Route

Revision	Amendment	Date

Leicester City Council

Planning, Development and Transportation

CLIENT: Leicester City Council

TITLE: GCW Phase 1 & 2 Overview Scheme Location Map

DRAWING No.		REV	SCALE
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Great Central Way – Phase 1

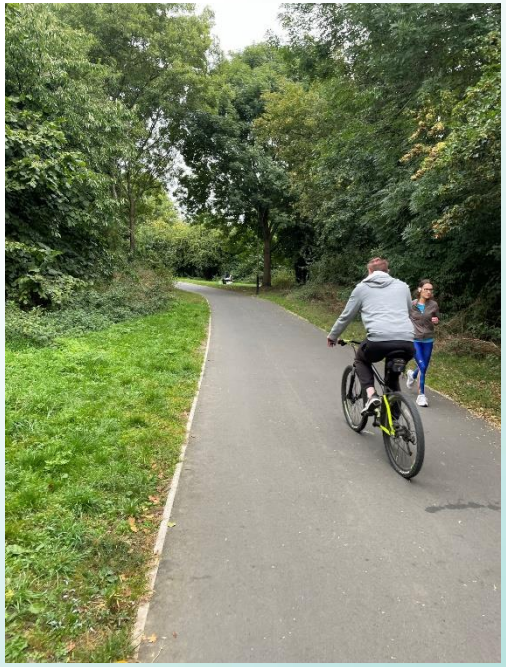
Before and after section between Evelyn Drive and Marlow Road

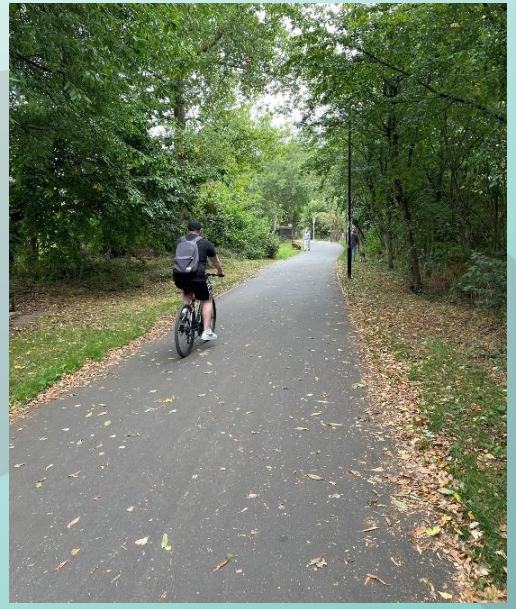
Before and after section between Upperton Road and railway bridge

Leicester City Council

Great Central Way – Phase 1

Before and after of section between Evelyn Road and Marlow Road





Before and after section between Evesham Road and Evelyn Drive

Leicester City Council

Great Central Way – Phase 2

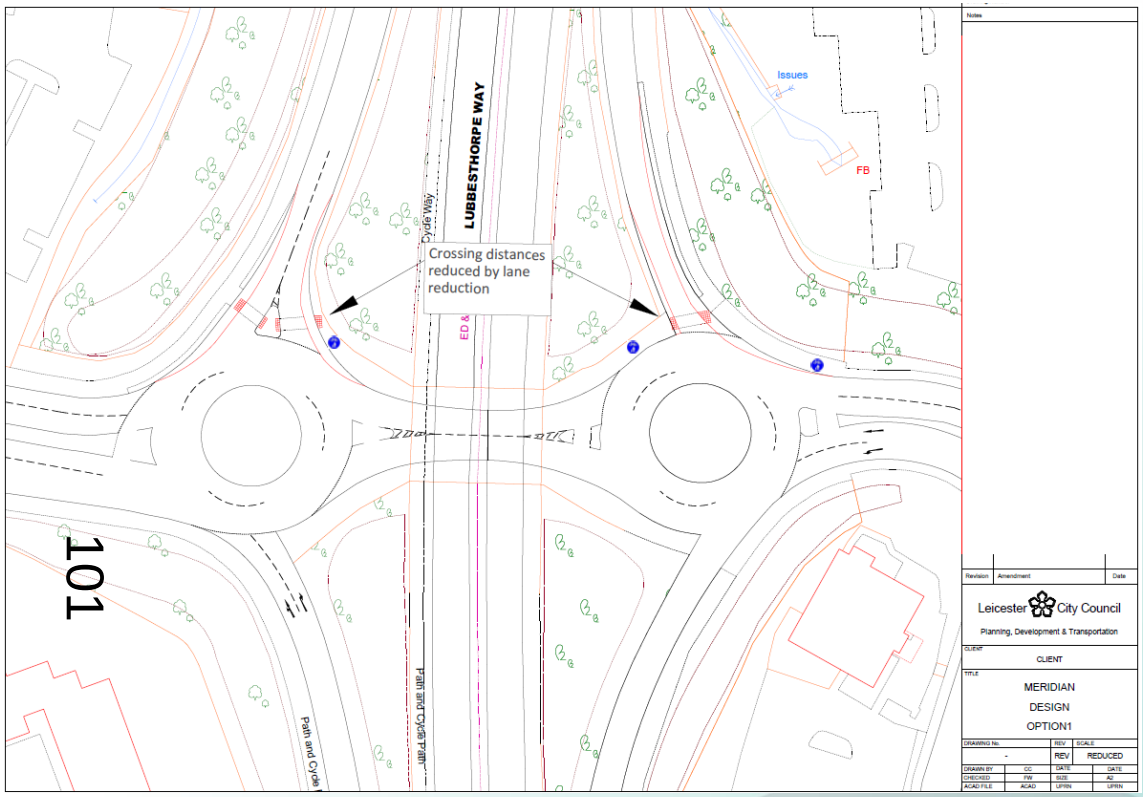
To enhance the planned new link from Narborough Road South to Great Central Way via Kingsway, we are proposing to improve the next stage of the route to New Lubbesthorpe by;

- Reducing crossing distances and improving visibility by the major roundabouts at Meridian/Lubbesthorpe Way
- Upgrading existing pedestrian and cycle facilities through Mossdale Meadows.
- Creating a new 3m path through Aylestone Meadows which connects to existing path leading to Braunstone Lane East

Overall, this will provide a quality continuous connection from New Lubbesthorpe to the city centre via Great Central Way

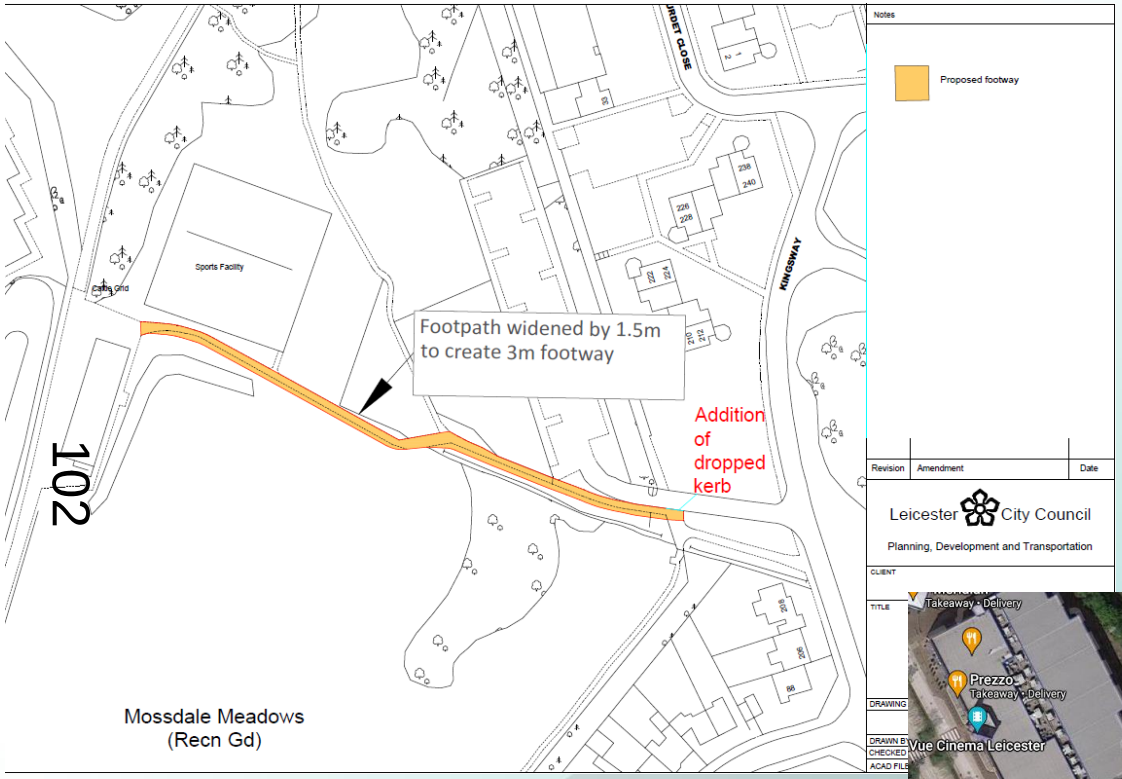
Leicester City Council

1. New Lubbesthorpe to Kingsway



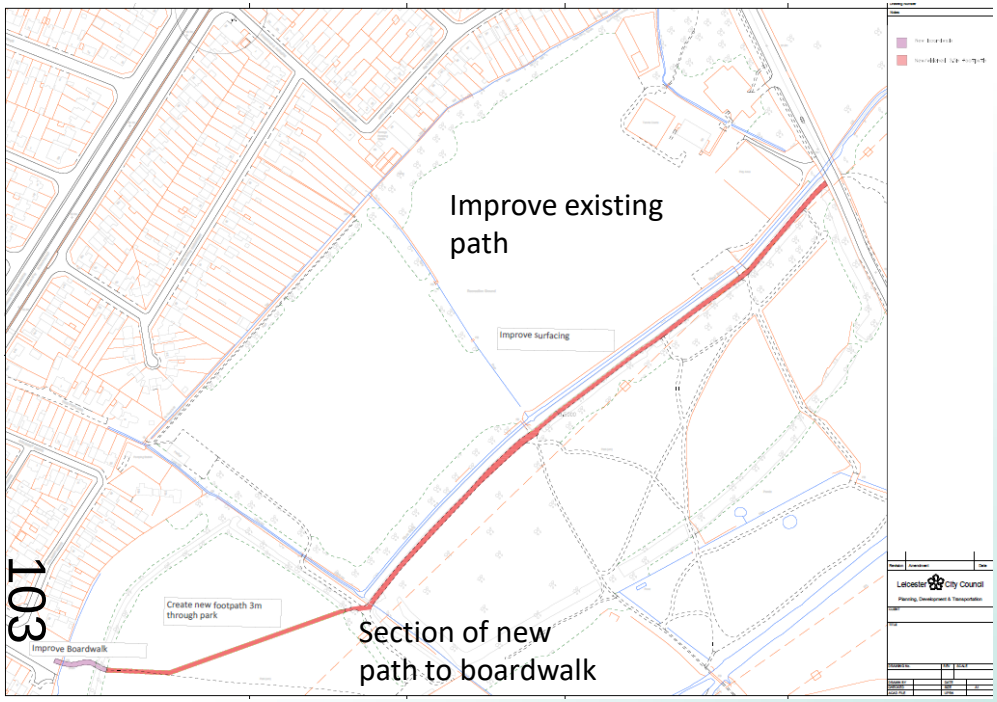
- Improvements on the north arms of the 2 roundabouts over Lubbesthorpe Way connecting New Lubbesthorpe and Meridian Leisure park
- Crossing distance reduced by extending the kerbs out into the carriageway. Also improves visibility of peds/cyclists
- Potential for connecting footpaths to be widened to create segregated facilities

2. New Lubbesthorpe to Kingsway



- Existing path through Mossdale Meadows to be widened from 1.5m to 3m and lighting improved.
- Meridian Leisure Park to create a new access between Chiquito restaurant and Vue cinema to provide pedestrian connection from New Lubbesthorpe to Braunstone.

3. Braunstone Lane East to Kingsway



- Existing path to be resurfaced.
- New 3m path to be created across Aylestone Meadow
- Existing board walk to be widened to 3m to make it easier for users to access the route
- Different surfacing options to be looked at; potential Breedon gravel material to be used through park, and Blacktop/Breedon gravel for existing/main footpath dependant on expected vehicular usage

Great Central Way – Next Steps

- Engage with ward councillors Oct 2021
- Public Engagement Nov 2021
- City Highways to start on site Spring 2022

Leicester City Council

Granby Street and St George Street

- £1.7M GBF allocation for pedestrian and cycle improvements to support City Centre and Cultural Quarter access and future office development
- £200k contribution from other transport budgets to give £1.9M total budget for both schemes
- Project completion anticipated Spring 2022

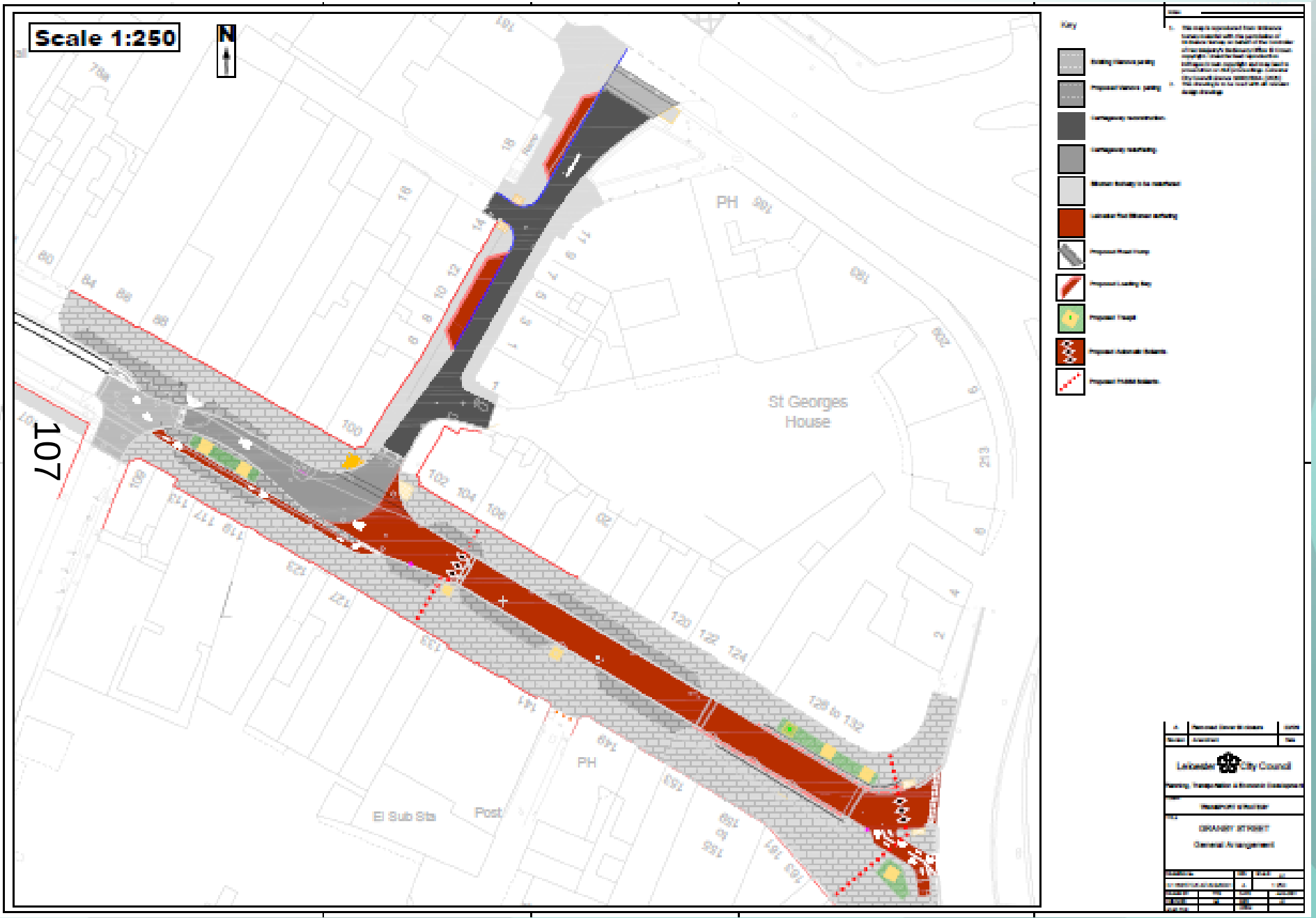
Leicester City Council

Granby Street Scheme

Scheme proposals:

- Pedestrianisation of Granby St between Northampton Street and Central Ring Road with public realm enhancements
- Highway improvements to Northampton Street
- Closure of Dover Street junction with Granby Street
- Alterations to cycle lane on Granby Street

Leicester City Council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Leicester City Council
GRANBY STREET
General Arrangement

Granby Street – Current Position

- Detailed design complete and out to tender
- Start on site currently programmed for January 2022
- Discussion continues about bespoke street furniture options as part of Heritage Action Zone work
- TRO advertised and no objections to pedestrianisation of Granby Street
- Concerns raised by Little Theatre and related objections received to closure of Dover Street. Further discussions required and this element has been removed from scheme to enable delivery within required funders timescale

Leicester City Council

St George Street:

To create a pedestrianised linear park in the Cultural Quarter, serving as:

- An enhanced access to the Cultural Quarter
- Early supporting infrastructure to planned regeneration on land south of Phoenix; creating a high quality pedestrian link to the railway station
- A public amenity for residents, workers and visitors in the cultural quarter

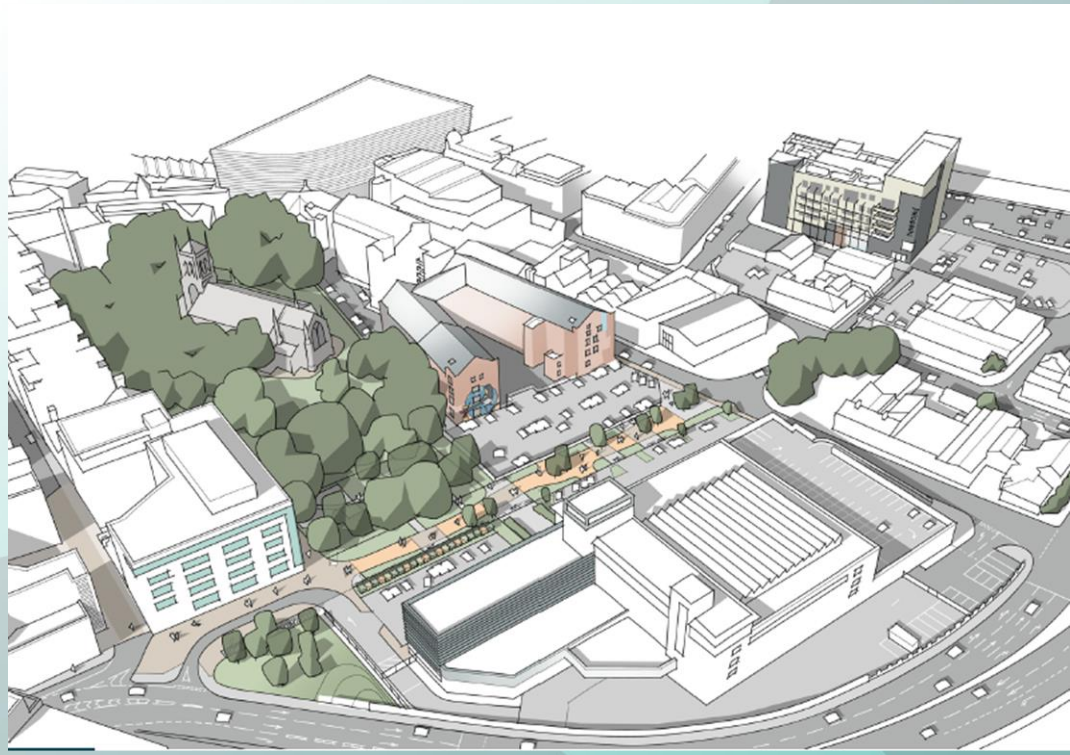
Leicester City Council

St George Street, Project Scope:

- Pedestrianisation of highway from Ring Road to Queen Street (vehicle egress from southern end of Mercury Place retained)
- Improvement works to St George Street Play area and LCC –owned ‘triangle’ car park adjacent to Colton Square.
- Relocation of affected car park access points
- Provision of e-bike-share docking station
- Phased delivery of scheme; provision for extension when development proposals to north and south of St George Street are more advanced

St George Street, Progress to Date:

- Key stakeholders engaged and aims agreed
- Topographical survey and below ground constraints mapping complete
- Agreement reached with directly affected land owners on car park access relocation
- Design complete
- Cost /contract supervisor consultant appointed
- Scheme issued to panel of contractors for pricing



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St George Street, Next Steps:

- Re-engage key stakeholders to update and undertake wider communications
- Issue Traffic Regulation Order for 3-week consultation
- Complete first phase Spring 2022
- Consider design and delivery strategy for subsequent phases

Leicester City Council

High Level Programme – Both Schemes

- Design Development – Complete
- Contractor appointment – October/November
- Construction Start –January 2022
- Completion – Spring 2022

Leicester City Council

CONNECTING LEICESTER
PROGRESS PHOTOS

Millstone Lane/Horsefair Street

CONNECTING LEICESTER
PROGRESS PHOTOS

Millstone Lane/Horsefair Street

CONNECTING LEICESTER PROGRESS PHOTOS

Pocklingtons Walk

CONNECTING LEICESTER PROGRESS PHOTOS

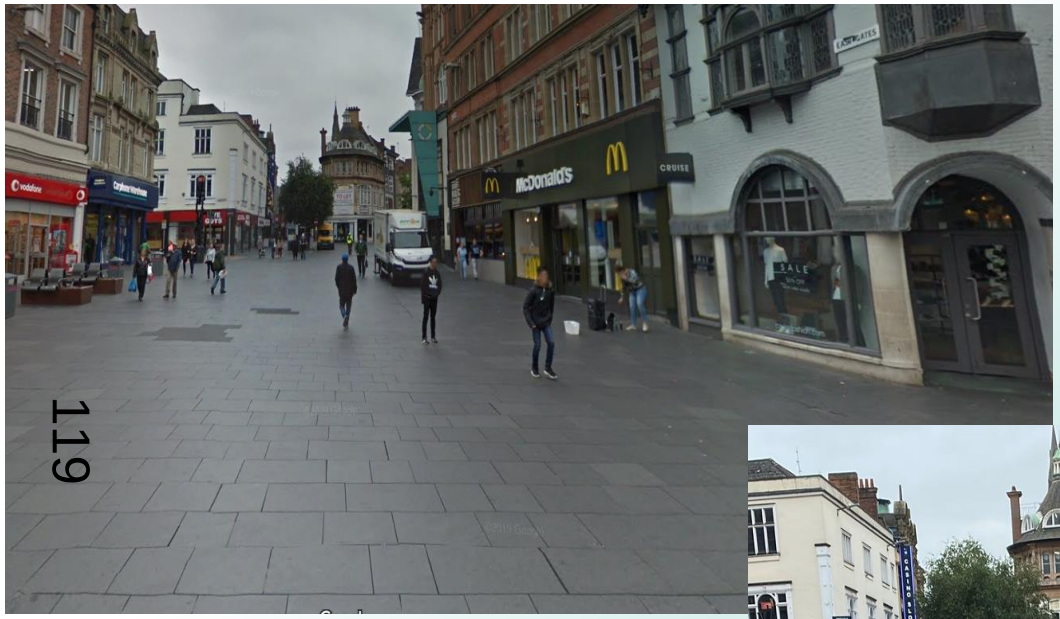
Market Place South

CONNECTING LEICESTER PROGRESS PHOTOS

Belgrave Gate

City Council

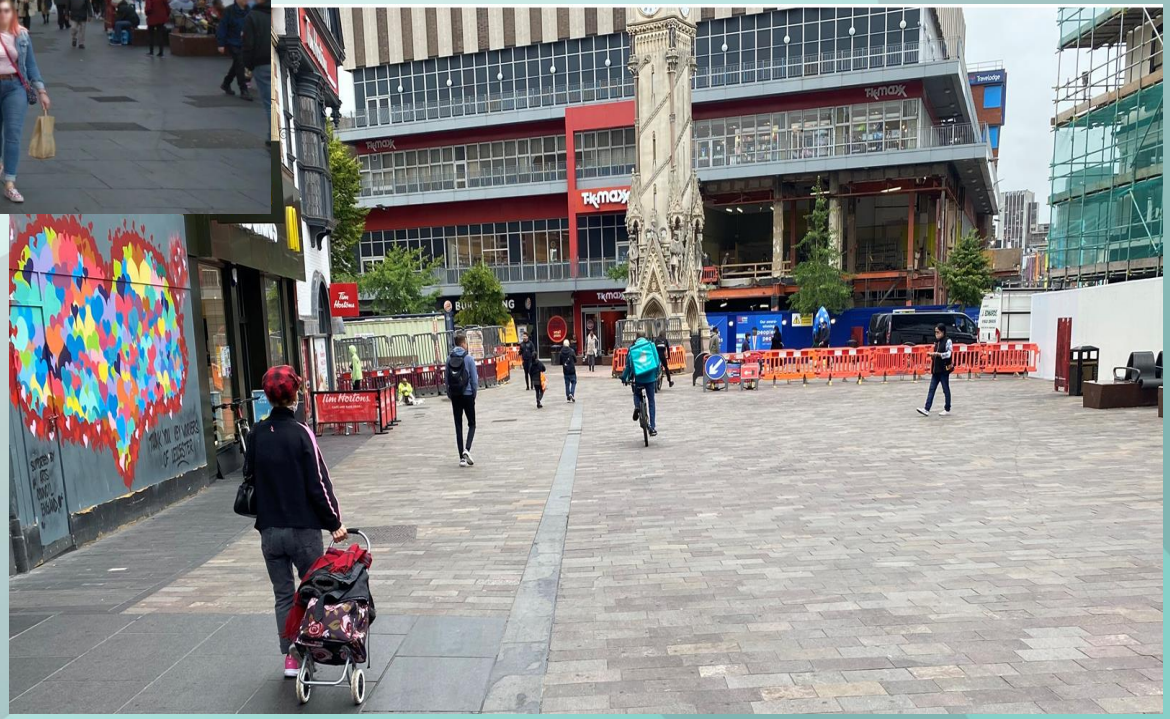
CONNECTING LEICESTER PROGRESS PHOTOS



East Gates

CONNECTING LEICESTER PROGRESS PHOTOS

Clock Tower



Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency (EDTCE) Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme 2021- 22

Meeting Date	Meeting Items	Actions Arising	Progress
16 June 2021	1) Accessibility Update 2) Transforming Cities Fund – Aylestone Road 3) Graduate Retention Update 4) Economic Recovery Plan Update	Item 1 referred to in March 2021 scrutiny minutes	Complete.
18 August 2021	1) COVID Economic Recovery Report 2) Inward Investment and Place Marketing 3) Demo of Economic Recovery Dashboard	Item 2 is in relation to the £185k grant for Leicester place marketing that was secured from LLEP; mentioned in March 2021 minutes. Item 3 was initially planned for the June meeting but didn't go ahead due to hybrid meeting issues.	Further update on Kickstart fund from LLEP to be given in the future.
Tuesday 7th September 2021 Special Meeting	1) Local Transport Plan and Workplace Parking Levy	Members of the Health Scrutiny Commission invited to this special meeting.	Complete with follow up in Dec 2021.

Appendix D

Meeting Date	Meeting Items	Actions Arising	Progress
13 October 2021	1) Recovery Plan update / City Growth template / Appendix - response to Local Level development review 2) Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031 3) Transforming Cities - Great Central Way project 4) Connecting Leicester – St George St/Granby St	Item 2 provides an over-arching framework for habitat and species conservation in Leicester, including priorities and targets	
15 December 2021	1) Local Transport Plan/ Workplace Parking Levy Update 2) City centre Economic Plan 3) Local Plan 4) Transforming Cities Projects: a. Saffron Lane/Aylestone Road b. Duns Lane/Braunstone Gate 5) Smart Cities Strategy		
19 January 2022	1) Waterside Regeneration Review 2) Construction Skills Hub / Employment Hub Update 3) Leicester Adult Education Update 4) Transforming Cities Projects: - Ashton Green - Blackbird Road/Parker Drive - Anstey Lane North - Beaumont Leys Park and Ride 5) Draft Revenue Budget 2022-23 6) Draft Capital Programme 2022-23		

Meeting Date	Meeting Items	Actions Arising	Progress
23 March 2022	1) Inward Investment / Place Marketing Update – follow up on LLEP £175k etc update on Kickstart Fund 2) Corporate Estate Management – Annual Report 3) Update on Leicester's Textile Sector (Modern Slavery and Exploitation) 4) Transforming Cities projects: - A6 - Soar Valley Way - A50		

Draft Forward Plan / Suggested Items for 2021/22

Topic	Details	Proposed Date
ONGOING **City Mayor & Executive Plan of Key Decisions** **Construction Skills Hub – Mike Dalzell** **Leicester Smart City Strategy – Matthew Clifton**	Commission to keep a watching brief and receive regular reports / updates on executive key decisions planned to relate to this portfolio. Accountable body for the delivery of the Construction Skills Hub, which will secure Construction Industry Training Board funding for the establishment. Adoption of a strategy that combines Leicester's digital, physical and social environment to deliver an inclusive, thriving and sustainable city for all.	Ongoing On or after 1 Dec 2021 On or after 1 Dec 2021
ONGOING Spending Review Programmes linked to: a) **Councils General Fund Revenue Budget Report** b) **Capital Programme Projects**	Commission to keep a watching brief and receive regular updates on issues related to budgets with this portfolio. Decisions consequential to the monitoring of expenditure in 2020/21 (if any). *(Full council in February 2018 agreed Council's General Fund Revenue Budget report 2018 to 2021).*	Ongoing
ONGOING **Consultations** Planning Policy – Call for Sites Additional Studies (Planning)	Members to consider relevant items to this commission from planned or live consultations to provide scrutiny comments and views Both end in December: comments on Ec. Dev Needs Assessment, water cycle study and local housing	Ongoing

Topic	Details	Proposed Date
	needs assessment. Call for comments on site suggestions to meet home/job needs.	
Connecting Leicester Projects	Commission agreed to be involved at the early stages of development of plans	Ongoing updates (
Economic Recovery Plan Update	Review of progress – this was split into 2 updates. First update was in February 2021 and included a LLEP update.	Second update completed in June 2021
Smart Cities	Information on proposed strategy	Deferred from Dec 19 meeting to 2021/22. Planned to also go through OSC
Healthier Air for Leicester – Air Quality Action Plan 2015 – 2026	Progress update on actions (joint with health & wellbeing scrutiny)	TBC
Cultural Quarter	Update	TBC
Waterside regeneration	Update	Dec 2021
Major Transport Projects (including NPIF projects)	Report on progress	TBC
Neighbourhood Highway Safety schemes	Report on progress	TBC
Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2031	Provides an over-arching framework for habitat and species conservation in Leicester, including priorities and targets (replacing the previous strategy that was considered by the Commission)	Oct 2021
Employment Hub update Including Jobs, Skills, Training and Apprenticeships issues where appropriate	Report on progress	Update received in Feb 2021. Next update requested for Feb 2022
Inward investment and Place Marketing	Report on progress including recent web site investment and general progress	Completed in Aug 2021. Next update in Aug 2022.

Topic	Details	Proposed Date
Leicester, Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)	Update/local Industrial strategy	Last update given in March 2021 and was linked to Economic Recovery Plan. Next update expected in March 2022.
Transforming Cities Programme	To report on developments / negotiations with government - two proposed updates on schemes; briefing sessions for members planned beforehand for January and March 2021	Spring 2021 – Meetings held in January and March meetings respectively. April meeting included BL Park and Ride Scheme. More schemes expected to be discussed e.g. Granby Street
Business Support Update	To receive a report on progress – both central government grants and then European funded projects	Covered in June 2021 under Economic Recovery Updates
Bus services/ bus related issues	To receive update following task group report	Planned for Spring 2020 but not taken due to COVID. TBC for Winter 2021 along with transport plan
Workplace levy	Update on progress and status following questions to Commission in December 2019	Sept and Dec 2021
Corporate Estate Management	More information on corporate managed estate (Estates and Building Services – Matthew Wallace) – raised in 19 November 2020 meeting. Public report will be available in April 2021.	Update given in April 2021 – CM has confirmed this will become an annual report. Next update expected in March 2022.
Local Transport Plan	Report on Plan	Sept 2021 and findings in Nov 2021
Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) Overview	Report on government scheme to encourage walking or cycling. Informal sessions would be planned before this.	Initially proposed for early 2021 but deferred to summer.
LASALS Update	Report	Latest update given in January 2021. Next update planned for January 2022.

Topic	Details	Proposed Date
Accessibility Update	Progress update	Initially planned for April 2021 but deferred to June meeting. June update completed.
Draft Revenue Budget 2022-23	Report to go to all Commissions	Annual report completed in January 2021 – next due for January 2022.
Draft Capital Programme 2022-23	Report to go to all Commissions	Annual report completed in January 2021 – next due for January 2022.
Update on Leicester's Textile Sector (Modern Slavery and Exploitation)	Update report raised since activity conducted in September 2020	Reports given in October 2020, with a follow up given in April 2021. Expected that another update will be required to the Commission in April 2022.
Graduate Retention Update	Update on project from Ec. Reg team	Completed June 2021
Executive Response to Local Level Development Review	Direction from the Executive that a response from them should be given to the Commission in relation to this review, as soon as possible.	Initially planned for April 2021 but deferred to the October meeting due to bid applications and the summer period – a response from Exec to this review is required to be given to the Commission.
Analysis of impact of COVID19 and lockdown on residents of Leicester	Mentioned in March 2021 meeting during the Economic Recovery Plan Update item – that commission would like to see at a future meeting, some analysis and data on who was most impacted by Covid-19 and lockdown, their ages, where they live, are they men/women, are they with or without qualifications, in low skilled/paid jobs, which businesses affected, which sectors, etc and from that can identify where to direct effort and initiatives.	TBC for later in the municipal year.
Discussion on Potential Items for Upcoming Commission Meetings	In the March 2021 meeting, Commission Members were asked to give suggestions on potential items. This was also extended to Commission Members again during the June meeting.	TBC Haymarket Consortium draft item will be picked up as a verbal update in the August

Topic	Details	Proposed Date
	This included: • An item on “Reserving Rights of Way of former Central Railways”. • Exploring issue of space in the urban realm and potential for building a fixed mass transit system for the future • An item to discuss The Impact on Climate Emergency in terms of Construction Projects • Insight into “Leicester Rangers proposing a new stadium using sustainable building” • A discussion around where lessons could be learnt about the £600k loan to Haymarket Consortium.	2021 meeting, followed by a report on engagement in September/October 2021.