

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 October 2019

**Title:** Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy

**Report of:** Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Julie Carr, Cabinet Member for Recycling, Waste and Open Spaces  
Councillor Matthew Bird, Cabinet Member for Sustainability

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To introduce the Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy

**Decision type:** Key

**Officer recommendation(s):** (1) To approve the Pesticide Policy and agree the policy will be reviewed one year from adoption  
(2) To approve the Pollinator Strategy for adoption and agree the strategy will be reviewed in 2021

**Reasons for recommendations:** To provide a framework and action plans for Lewes District Council in its approach to land management

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The council owns and manages a number of green assets including downland and nature reserve sites; parks; cemeteries; the gardens of council houses, flats and other council buildings; allotments; sports grounds; informal recreation grounds; some road verges and other miscellaneous green areas. Our approach to land management is informed by an understanding of the value of biodiversity in our natural environment.
- 1.2 The ground-breaking UK National Ecosystem Assessment published in 2011 provided the evidence for the critical services provided by the natural world but also demonstrated that nature is undervalued in decision-making and that many of the benefits derived from nature are in decline. The independent review of England's wildlife sites (2010) concluded that England's collection of wildlife areas does not represent a coherent and resilient ecological network capable of responding to the challenges of climate change and other pressures.

- 1.3 Lewes District Council was one of the first councils to adopt a Pesticide Reduction Plan in 2016, following a petition from local residents on the issue. To achieve this, officers researched various methods of weed control and Lewes was one of the first local authorities to start using the hot foam system. With the natural world facing threats to an unprecedented degree, the council is scaling up efforts to defend local biodiversity through the Pesticide Policy and the Pollinator Strategy.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 These statements of intent set out how the council will continue to achieve pollinator-friendly land management, building on current good practice.
- 2.2 The council's aim is to stop using pesticides through a phased reduction, using alternatives wherever possible.

## **3 Outcome expected and performance management**

- 3.1 As custodian of significant areas of land, by adopting these strategies the council can make a positive impact on the natural environment across the district.

## **4 Consultation**

- 4.1 None

## **5 Corporate plan and council policies**

- 5.1 The strategies are wholly aligned with the Sustainability Policy 2018, with this statement in particular:

**We are aware of and will work to reduce our environmental impact wherever it is within our power to control or influence this:**

We will seek out opportunities to improve biodiversity and green infrastructure within our district.

- 5.2 In addition, the Brighton and Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere Region, 'The Living Coast' was established in 2014. 'The Living Coast' identity aims to get more people looking after, improving and enjoying the designated World Biosphere Region, which comprises the land and sea which stretches from Shoreham to Newhaven and Lewes, ranked as an 'outstanding natural landscape'
- <http://www.unesco-mab.org.uk/brighton--lewes-downs-biosphere.html>

## **6 Business case and alternative option(s) considered**

- 6.1 The commitments made in the Pesticide Policy and the Pollinator Strategy have been carefully considered to achieve a balanced and practical approach to managing land assets.

6.2 Future projects and activity arising from the adoption of these strategies will be subject to viability analysis.

## **7 Financial appraisal**

7.1 These proposals will require some changes in the way the service is delivered and the way that existing budgets are utilised. It is proposed that most changes will be planned and carried out within existing budgets.

7.2 Where / if additional budgets are required to implement future plans, we will make separate funding bids either internally or through external sources where available.

7.3 The funding requirement (matched funding) for the Chalk Life project is approximately £5000 per year per council for a four year period. This will be required from 2021/22 and will be subject to a separate report if and when the bid for the Chalk Life project is successful.

7.4 The service currently receives Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding in both LDC and EBC. This will end in 2021/22. After this, it is hoped that there will be new grant funding to bid for (which has been promised in principle by the Government), but the form or value of any new funding will not be available until after Brexit as the current funding is through the EC.

7.5 The service is continually researching any other grant funding opportunities.

*GJM 20.08.19*

## **8 Legal implications**

8.1 Biodiversity policy is a devolved responsibility in the UK, and Part 3 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 is the legislation that requires specified public bodies (including district councils), in exercising their functions, to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

In this context, conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.

The national strategy is provided by 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' issued by Defra in 2011. Its key requirements are, by 2020, 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.

Such requirements should be used to form the basis for meaningful and practical biodiversity policy.

Lewes District Council has a programme of devolving land to Town and Parish Councils. When the District Council devolves land in this way it can, if so instructed, ensure that there is a contractual commitment on the part of the Town and Parish Councils to adhere to and comply with the District Council's

Pesticide Policy and the Pollinator Strategy in place from time to time as part of that transaction.

*Lawyer consulted 15.08.19*

*Legal ref: 008502-JOINT-OD [KS 10.10.19]*

## **9 Risk management implications**

- 9.1 The risk of not developing a pesticide policy and a pollinator strategy is that the organisation will lack a coherent framework by which it considers environmental impacts in its approach to managing parks and other land assets.

## **10 Equality analysis**

- 10.1 EaFA 'no relevance' report completed.

## **11 Sustainability implications**

- 11.1 Climate change is a direct driver that is increasingly exacerbating the impact of other drivers on nature and human well-being. Humans are estimated to have caused an observed warming of approximately 1.0°C by 2017 relative to pre-industrial levels, with average temperatures over the past 30 years rising by 0.2°C per decade. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and the fires, floods and droughts that they can bring, have increased in the past 50 years, while the global average sea level has risen by 16 to 21 cm since 1900, and at a rate of more than 3 mm per year over the past two decades. These changes have contributed to widespread impacts in many aspects of biodiversity, including species distributions, [...] and ecosystem function. According to observational evidence, the effects are accelerating in marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems and are already impacting agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and nature's contributions to people [ref: background paper].
- 11.2 The proposals presented in the accompanying documents aim to mitigate these impacts in our district to some degree by protecting and enhancing our natural assets.

## **12 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Pesticide Policy
- Appendix 2 – Pollinator Strategy

## **13 Background papers**

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

- ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION – 6 May 2019

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