

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 2 June 2021

**Title:** Eastbourne Biodiversity Strategy

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

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Colin Swansborough, Portfolio Holder for Place Services and Councillor Jonathan Dow, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To introduce the Biodiversity Strategy and associated work plan

**Decision type:** Key

**Officer recommendation(s):** That Cabinet approves

(1) The Eastbourne Borough Council Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2025 set out in Appendix 1

(2) The associated Action Plan, set out in Appendix 2 of the Biodiversity Strategy

**Reasons for recommendations:** To set out the principles and approach to supporting biodiversity and to provide a framework and work plan for Eastbourne Borough Council in its collaborative approach to protecting and enhancing natural assets

**Contact Officer(s):** Name: Jane Goodall  
Post title: Strategy and Partnership Lead, Quality Environment  
E-mail: [jane.goodall@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:jane.goodall@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)  
Telephone number: 07788 515359

Name: Andy Frost  
Post title: Customer First Resolution Team Senior Specialist Advisor (Green Consultancy)  
E-mail: [andy.frost@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:andy.frost@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)  
Telephone number: 07966 645005

---

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The natural world is facing threats on an unprecedented scale with the known rates of biodiversity loss and disappearance of habitats and species attributed to ongoing human pressures.
- 1.2 In 2019 the council declared a climate emergency and committed to deliver a carbon neutral town by 2030. Nature-based solutions are at the heart of delivering against this target and work programmes are aligned to climate resilience and improving local biodiversity, through:
- the adoption of a pollinator strategy and pesticide policy in 2019.
  - ongoing projects to increase valuable ecological habitats through better mowing regimes and tree and hedge planting where feasible.
  - continual reviews of management and contracts for council-owned land and property

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 The purpose of this strategy is to set out ambitious yet achievable aims and actions in order to better tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation across the borough and the wider inter-connected landscape.
- 2.2 The visions and actions contained within the strategy have been developed in response to the urgency of the climate emergency being faced. The strategy will enable the council to work with the community to co-ordinate its response into meaningful and long-lasting action.

## **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 borough and influence others where possible.
- 3.2 Biodiverse landscapes bring a multitude of benefits including:
- Carbon storage
  - Ecosystem function
  - Recreation and wellbeing
  - Food production
  - Adaptation to climate change
- 3.3 Our broad key aims can be summarised as follows:
- To maintain and increase biodiversity on council-owned and managed land.
  - To engage and enable community-led nature-based projects and to be involved in partnerships that promote natural capital and biodiversity across the borough.
  - To ensure that all developments maximise the opportunities for well-considered gains in biodiversity.

- 3.4 Officers will meet with the two Portfolio Holders to review the progress of activity within the attached action plan on a six-monthly basis.

## **4 Consultation**

- 4.1 The strategy and action plan has been shared with Treebourne, our local community delivery partner, and suggestions for the action plan were gratefully received.

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

- 5.1 The strategy is wholly aligned with the Sustainability Policy 2018, with these statements 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 The vision for biodiversity set out in 'Eastbourne Carbon Neutral 2030 - A plan for action' is:

Existing green spaces, the coast and the sea have been protected and enhanced where appropriate and new protected spaces have been created to enable animal and plant life to flourish.

- 5.3 This Biodiversity Strategy complements the Climate Emergency Strategy, November 2020.

## **6 Financial appraisal**

- 6.1 The adoption of the strategy will not of itself have an immediate direct financial consequence, as the incorporation of biodiversity into many of the Council's functions and services can be achieved within existing resources, providing that this is maintained. However, it will not be possible to meet fully all the objectives and actions in the 2021–2025 EBC Biodiversity Strategy within the existing budgets of those services responsible for implementing the actions identified. The intention should be to make progress in all the areas described within the strategy, and monitoring progress should identify whether resources need to be redirected.

- 6.2 The funding of many activities is complicated: for example, some are pursued through combination of funding with partners; some through encouraging other organisations to pursue them independently; some through bids to grant giving bodies; and some through realigning budgets. In some areas the Council has statutory obligations to meet duties and responsibilities; while others are driven by the need to meet targets. In both instances budgets should reflect this. The key to determining whether budgets need to be realigned will be a comprehensive and effective monitoring procedure.

## **7 Legal implications**

- 7.1 Part 3 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 requires specified public bodies (including borough 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.

*Lawyer consulted 17.02.21*

*Legal ref: 009913-JOINT-OD*

## **8 Risk management implications**

- 8.1 Failure to agree and progress the strategy could impact upon the council achieving its ambitions to address the climate emergency.

## **9 Equality analysis**

- 9.1 The Equality Act does not have key relevance to this strategy, which is chiefly aimed at land management and development considerations.

However, the Covid 19 pandemic has brought the subject of mental health and wellbeing to the fore, with access to nature paramount to healthy, thriving communities able to cope with such difficult times.

*Agreed 06/05/2021*

## **10 Environmental sustainability implications**

- 10.1 The proposals presented in the accompanying documents aim to mitigate climate change impacts in the borough by protecting and enhancing Eastbourne's natural assets. The council is committed to supporting measures to help arrest biodiversity losses, restore habitats and species and work for climate resilience to promote healthy and thriving communities. This is recognised through this strategy, with the need to protect and maintain as well as enhance and increase biodiversity and nature across Eastbourne.

## **11 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – The Eastbourne Borough Council Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2025

## **12 Background papers**

- Eastbourne Borough Council Climate Emergency Strategy, Baseline Report and Action Plan November 2020

<https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/resources/assets/inline/full/0/294156.pdf>