

Lewes District Council

Biodiversity Strategy

2021 - 2025



STRONGER together



Lewes District Council



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Document name:	Biodiversity Strategy
Document type:	Strategy

Authority(ies) covered:	LDC
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Version (e.g. first draft, final report):	Final draft for Cabinet briefing
Approved by:	Cllrs Julie Carr and Matthew Bird
Date of publication:	Date
Revision due:	Date 2023
Final Equality and Fairness Analysis (EaFA) report approved by:	Seanne Sweeney
Date final EaFA report approved:	6 May 2021

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Executive Summary

With the natural world facing threats to an unprecedented degree, Lewes District Council is scaling up efforts to defend local biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. For more detail on the council's approach to these issues, visit our [climate change webpage](#).

Healthy and resilient societies depend on giving nature the space it needs. The Covid-19 pandemic makes the need to protect and restore nature all the more urgent. The pandemic has raised awareness of the links between our own health and the health of ecosystems and that the risk of emergence and spread of infectious diseases increases as nature is destroyed. It has demonstrated the need for sustainable supply chains and consumption patterns that do not exceed planetary boundaries. Protecting and restoring biodiversity and well-functioning ecosystems is therefore key to boost our resilience and prevent the emergence and spread of future diseases.

Past wildlife laws have looked to tackle biodiversity losses through legislative channels for over 30 years, but have been largely ineffective, falling short of achieving the desired outcomes of arresting loss and promoting gains.

New legislation by way of the Environment Bill and Agriculture Bill are on the horizon, and look to redress shortcomings by setting out new measures to better arrest biodiversity declines through focus on natural capital, ecosystem services and biodiversity net gains with the aim to leave the environment in a better state than it is in currently.

In 2019, Lewes District Council committed to reduce council greenhouse gas emissions to net zero and to become fully 'climate resilient' by 2030 and to address the ecological disaster (Feb 2021). Meaningful biodiverse and nature-based solutions are at the heart of these ambitions.

Across Lewes district work is 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, tree and hedge planting where feasible.
- continual reviews of management and contracts for council-owned land and property, as well as working closely with our town and parish councils where we provide contracted services.

Lewes District Council will support and proactively pursue 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 the district, contributing to recoveries at a landscape-wide scale.

Our broad key aims can be summarised as follows:

- To seek nature-based solutions, ecosystem services and re-naturing and rewilding opportunities as guiding principles in all council and partnership endeavours.
- To maintain and increase biodiversity on council-owned and managed land.

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- To engage and enable community-led nature-based projects and to be involved in partnerships that promote natural capital and biodiversity across the district.
- To ensure that all developments maximise the opportunities for well-considered gains in biodiversity.

Purpose of this strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to set out ambitious yet achievable aims and actions to better tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation across the district and the wider inter-connected landscape. This strategy aligns to the council's climate and ecological emergency commitments, which have the overarching aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality and climate change resilience by 2030.

What is biodiversity and why is it important?

Biological diversity or biodiversity is the wealth of ecosystems, species and genes on our planet, which underpin every part of our health and our livelihoods, and which are ecologically, inextricably interrelated and interdependent.

The definition of biodiversity includes the variability within and between species and within and between ecosystems and so also includes size of habitats and the quantity of plants and animals as well as the number of species.

According to the [Natural Capital Protocol](#), biodiversity is our....

'...life insurance, giving us food, fresh water and clean air, shelter and medicine, mitigating natural disasters, pests and diseases and contributing to regulating the climate. Biodiversity is our natural capital, delivering ecosystem services that underpin our economy.'¹

Natural assets

Nature offers the potential to store and sequester carbon at a comparatively low cost with a wide range of natural capital enhancements for the investment. For example, engineered solutions can cost between four and ten times more per tonne of CO₂ when compared to nature-based interventions. The following four options need to be evaluated, while recognising that each approach will be spatially explicit¹:

- i) Managing and increasing soil carbon
- ii) Improving wildlife / biodiversity
- iii) Managing and increasing tree cover and
- iv) Managing freshwaters and wetlands.
- v) Managing the marine and coastal environment

¹Natural Capital Committee 2020

Advice on using nature-based interventions to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879797/ncc-nature-based-interventions.pdf

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Where feasible, biodiversity indicators and metrics will be reported as part of the Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan.

Why do we need a biodiversity strategy?

Biodiversity losses allied with climate change are deemed the most critical global environmental threat of our time.

Current rates of species extinction are unparalleled with little dispute within the scientific communities that it is being driven by human activities namely loss of habitats to urbanisation and agricultural intensification. Population sizes of wildlife decreased by 60% globally between 1970 and 2014². The UK context is set out in the [State of Nature Report, 2019](#).

A study published in the Proceedings of Natural Science shows that farmed poultry today makes up 70% of all birds on the planet, with just 30% being wild. The picture is even more stark for mammals – 60% of all mammals on Earth are livestock, mostly cattle and pigs, 36% are human and just 4% are wild animals.

This well-documented deterioration and loss of biodiversity jeopardises the environment at every level including climate regulation and the provision of ecosystem services on which all healthy and thriving communities depend. Quite simply put, life as we know it and all that we hold dear is at risk.



Photo: An insect pollinating a wildflower

The need to better protect, restore, and increase biodiversity has come to prominence in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the essential need for access to nature, open spaces and wild landscapes for all. The pandemic has brought the

² <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25645-we-are-killing-species-at-1000-times-the-natural-rate/>

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subject of mental health and wellbeing more to the fore, with nature solutions – bigger, better and more joined up natural greenspaces, especially for those in more deprived or urban communities – paramount to healthy, thriving communities able to cope with such difficult times.

Policy and legislative context

Emerging legislative drivers, namely the UK Government's long-anticipated Environment Bill³, alongside the Agricultural Bill⁴, seek to redress this by providing a framework for the tangible recovery of our natural environment through a natural capital, ecosystems services and biodiversity net gain approach.

The Bills set out a more substantial legal framework to achieve the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it and to pass on to the next generation a natural environment protected and enhanced for the future by restoring and enhancing nature and green spaces⁵.

The focal areas

Aligned to Lawton's "Making Space for Nature" principles of '**Bigger, better, more joined up**'⁶, we see the following as the key focal areas for this biodiversity strategy:

- 1. Collaboration through partnership working**
The need for partnership and community involvement, including integrated working, to feasibly achieve tangible, meaningful and germane biodiversity aims at a local and landscape scale.
- 2. Preservation and enhancement of existing habitats**
The need to genuinely protect and enhance existing biodiversity resources through biodiversity led management at a landscape scale including council owned assets, designated sites, buffer zones and corridors.
- 3. Create more and connect up**
The need to achieve Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs) and Ecological Networks dedicating land specifically for biodiversity-rich habitats and wild landscapes, by increasing and creating new and joining up fragmented islands of habitat, such as nature reserves, etc.
- 4. Implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain within development management**
The need to accurately and transparently implement meaningful, measurable and appropriate biodiversity net gains in new developments – secured for the long term.
- 5. Promotion of biodiversity understanding council wide**
The need for coherent and integrated understanding and due process to ensure current and future biodiversity duties are being meaningfully met.
- 6. Nature based solutions and ecosystem services**
Nature based solutions (NBSs) demonstrate potential as cost-effective long-term interventions for flooding risks and land degradation and when delivered

³ [The Environment Bill 2020](#)

⁴ [www.gov.uk/government/news/agriculture-bill-to-boost-environment-and-food-production 16 January 2020](#)

⁵ [www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan Published 11 January 2018 with updates May 2019](#)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-2010>

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effectively can enhance the stocks of natural assets and the ecosystem services they provide.

1. Collaboration through partnership working

The need to pool knowledge and resources is paramount to achieving success. This is especially key given severe resourcing and funding restrictions, and other constraints such as land, assets and the on-going pursuit of conflicting disciplines such as development and economic growth.

To achieve collaboration and sharing of knowledge, resources, funds etc, we see the importance of working with new and existing partners from strategic to community levels to sustain and enhance biodiversity.

Strategic Level:

1. Active participation and appropriate representation and resourcing of strategic partnerships including Team East Sussex (LEP), Local Nature Partnerships (LNP), Sussex Wildlife Trust, Brighton and Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere Partnership, 'The Living coast'⁷, etc.
2. Support wider landscape project partnerships such as Changing Chalk, Ouse Valley CARES, Sussex FLOW, Local Wildlife Sites Initiative, Eastern South Downs Farm Cluster⁸.
3. Raising awareness and understanding of biodiversity.
4. Knowledge sharing and capacity building.
5. Influencing planning and development.
6. Enabling delivery and project design.

The above can be achieved directly and by working with our partners to pool our resources.

Community:

1. Key to our success is the support of town and parish councils, civic groups, local residents and local communities.
2. We will continue to work with and support informal groups of residents that actively look for space to plant trees and create more diverse areas within their communities, as well as working closely with more formal organisations that organise schemes and events, such as www.greenhavens.network and www.facebook.com/LewesUrbanArboretum
3. Support community group partnerships focused on shared aims such as increasing pollinator habitats and reducing pesticide usage.
4. We will build on our links with the community using existing community groups (such as Wildflower Lewes, Greenhavens, Railway Land Wildlife Trust, Friends of Groups etc) to encourage and promote better biodiversity awareness and understanding and we will use available tools such as social media, press releases and interpretation/information panels.

⁷ <http://www.unesco-mab.org.uk/brighton--lewes-downs-biosphere.html>

⁸ [Eastern-south-downs-farmer-cluster](#)

2. Preserve and enhance existing valuable habitats

There is a real need to properly protect and manage existing biodiversity resources including council-owned assets, designated sites, buffer zones and corridors and help educate and influence regarding those resources outside council ownership.

The district covers a wide, varied and valued landscape and coast, with those assets under council control consisting of amenity spaces including parks, verges and open spaces, downland, grassland scrub and trees; cemeteries, amenity woodland; landscaped grounds in and around council housing as well as nature reserves.

Lewes District Council has a long stretch of coastline with the seaward and intertidal area almost completely lying within the Beachy Head West Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and parts of the Seaford to Beachy Head Site of Special Scientific Interest within the coastal sections. The SSSI area includes the highest chalk cliffs in the UK and below these extensive intertidal waves cut platforms and subtidal chalk ridges exist which are among the best examples of marine chalk habitat in the country. The importance of the geological features is recognised in the SSSI citation.

Nationally protected species such as peregrine falcons hunt and breed along the coastal cliffs.



Photo: A cliff top area showing diverse plant life and habitat.

The shallow nearshore waters and highly dynamic intertidal environment support a rich diversity of wildlife, including rock-boring worms, barnacles, anemones, crustaceans (e.g. velvet swimming crabs, lobsters, prawns) and molluscs (e.g. rock-

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boring piddocks, top shell snails, periwinkles, limpets) and protected animals including short-snouted seahorses, blue mussel beds and native oysters. It is also known to be a key nursery and spawning ground for several fish species.

We will support Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) in the restoration of marine habitats that can play a significant role in carbon sequestration and storage as well as providing a buffer against erosion processes. Between Seaford and Newhaven there is an open stretch of shingle beach supporting species specific to that habitat such as yellow-horned poppy and sea kale.

The many priority habitats including vegetated shingle, coastal salt marsh, chalk grassland, floodplain grazing marsh, saline lagoon, creeks, cliffs and maritime slopes are all important and irreplaceable habitats. Coastal Habitats are under threat from development, visitor pressure and coastal protection measures. Some of these habitats such as vegetated shingle are extraordinarily fragile once removed from or protected from natural processes. Sussex vegetated shingle is of high significance due to the proportion of national and European extent and yet it has probably suffered the greatest loss of area due to it being a favourite substrate upon which urban development has taken place.

It has become widely recognised that even the undesignated countryside and other undeveloped areas, due to their location near the coast, are particularly important for a wildlife assemblage not seen just a short distance from the coast. The local council and community recognise the importance of this and will support the protection and enhancement of coastal areas. We will recognise the significance of coastal areas in the Local Plan as part of wider habitat connectivity.

3. Creating more and joining up existing biodiversity habitats

There is a need to provide Nature Recovery Networks⁹ and Ecological Networks⁹ by creating new biodiversity-rich habitats, increasing the existing and joining them up where possible.

An ecological network can be understood as a number of core, well connected, high quality areas of well-functioning ecosystems, together with those parts of the intervening landscape that are 'wildlife-friendly' and which, collectively, allow wildlife to thrive. As well as having a primary role of supporting abundant wildlife, a nature network should also enhance natural beauty, heritage and conserve geodiversity. Opportunities should be taken to deliver benefits for people, such as flood alleviation, recreational opportunities and provide nature-based solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Many past projects have been undertaken to identify and map strategic locations to concentrate efforts and resources. These include Biodiversity Opportunity Areas mapped by Sussex Local Nature Partnership¹⁰ since 2008, as shown on council mapping resources including those within the district, connected or in close proximity:

- East Brighton Downs
- Lewes Brooks and the Ouse Valley

⁹[Wildlifetrusts.org/nature-recovery-network](https://wildlifetrusts.org/nature-recovery-network)

¹⁰SussexLNP.org.uk/BOAs

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- Lewes Downs
- Mid Ouse Floodzone
- Stanmer and Ditchling Downs
- Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest

The South Downs Nature Improvement Areas¹¹ (NIA) project was in response to the government's review, with the aim of creating bigger, better, more and joined spaces for nature. The South Downs Way Ahead NIA was one of 12 successful partnerships funded as Defra pilots, with significant matched funding, to deliver NIA projects, over three financial years, from 2012-15. Its 5 objectives are:

1. **'Walk the Chalk'** to broaden the South Downs Way National Trail as a semi-natural corridor and improve the habitat qualities and experiences of the route.
2. **'Linking the Fragments'** to achieve real improvements to conservation and management of chalk grassland at the heart of the matrix of downland habitats.
3. **'Surface to Groundwater'** to demonstrate the viability and benefits of an input-based approach to the improvement of groundwater quality.
4. **'Town to Down'** to assess and demonstrate the benefits of ecosystem services to urban populations.
5. **'Valuing the Chalk'** to attribute an environmental, economic and social value to the benefits and services provided by chalk downland.

Building on the Sussex Local Nature Partnership adopted Natural Capital Strategy¹² we will support the Sussex Local Nature Partnership, South Downs National Park, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre to identify strategic Nature Recovery Network areas and Ecological Networks within the district.

This would give us an opportunity to support partners in progressing NRNs following Natural England's practitioner's guidance¹³ and the 10 steps:

- 1) Understand the place
- 2) Create a vision
- 3) Involve people
- 4) Create core sites
- 5) Build resilience
- 6) Embrace dynamism
- 7) Encourage diversity
- 8) Think 'networks'
- 9) Start now but plan long-term
- 10) Monitor progress.

This may then allow us to progress projects on strategic corridors such as the River Ouse and floodplains with projects including Lewes Brooks restoration and wildflower verge management.

¹¹ [Gov.uk/publications/nature-improvement-areas-improved-ecological-networks-2015](https://gov.uk/publications/nature-improvement-areas-improved-ecological-networks-2015)
[Southdowns.gov.uk/2016/Case-Study-South-Downs-Way-Ahead-NIA](https://southdowns.gov.uk/2016/Case-Study-South-Downs-Way-Ahead-NIA)

¹² SussexLNP.org.uk/Natural-Capital-Investment-Strategy_ADOPTED_Final_Dec2019.pdf

¹³ Natural England Research Report NERR082. *Nature Networks: A Summary for Practitioners*

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3.1 - The importance of appropriate planting

The council is committed to protecting, improving and developing the district's tree stock in public places, in accordance with the principle of the right tree for the right place. In addition, encouraging natural regeneration of woodland, ancient woodland restoration, maintenance of existing trees, and connecting habitats where we have the influence to do so.

A high priority and preference will always be given to native species, including fruit-bearing trees, and a conscious effort will be made to plant more native hedge mixes to assist or replace fences, providing living barriers with ecological value. According to the [Woodland Trust](#), a vital role played by trees and hedgerows is to provide connectivity between habitats, and this is another reason that native tree species are important, because other natives species (birds, bugs, fungi, small mammals, etc) rely on them as part of complex ecosystems.

The value of street trees and urban greening lies in improving climate resilience: they provide shelter and shade, urban cooling and contribute to natural drainage. They also have immense value for human wellbeing, absorbing pollution and improving mental health.

Resilience to pests and diseases will be achieved by varying species diversity wherever possible and where appropriate with locally, or at least UK & Ireland, sourced & grown plants, for biosecurity. The sad experience of ash dieback and other pests and diseases demonstrates why this matters.

In terms of carbon capture, it is established woodland, in particular woodland soil, that has the greatest value, as the recent [Natural England study on carbon and habitats](#) confirms.

We will work closely with partners such as town and parish councils, East Sussex County Council and local tree groups, to identify suitable planting locations.

4. Implement biodiversity net gains within development management

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development and/or land management that aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Following public consultation, the government confirmed the forthcoming Environment Bill will be used to mandate BNG within planning – meaning the delivery of much-needed infrastructure, housing and development is not at the expense of vital biodiversity.

In advance of biodiversity net gain becoming mandated we ask that development proposals incorporate BNG principles and to support this requirement we have produced a Biodiversity Technical Advice Note (TAN) to inform planning applicants of the council's expectations at an early stage, so the necessary integration of biodiversity can inform the design of schemes from the outset.

The BNG process will require developers to provide a quantitative account for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development or land management changes through the use of DEFRA's / Natural England's Biodiversity Metric tool¹⁴

¹⁴ [publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 \(JP029\)](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/The-Biodiversity-Metric-2.0-(JP029))

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The metric provides an evaluation to be undertaken by suitably qualified, experienced and competent personnel (i.e. ecologists) to ensure habitats for wildlife are measurably left in a better state than they were pre-development.

They must assess the type of habitat and its condition before submitting plans, and then demonstrate how they are improving biodiversity – such as through the mitigation hierarchy of retention and protection of valuable habitats, mitigation and compensation required and appropriate measures such as habitats creation, improvement, and inclusion of green corridors, or forming integrated local nature spaces in-situ.

Biodiversity improvements on site would be encouraged, but in circumstances where they are not possible, developers will need to pay a levy for habitat creation or improvement elsewhere. These net gain credits can be used to fund biodiversity improvements within the district.

Linking to the NRN's (in section 3 above) – the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) says that plans should: “identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation”.

Paragraph 170 states; Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (among other criteria) minimising impact on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

We commit to working towards the British Standard and will achieve this by:

1. Promoting our Biodiversity TAN to clearly state what is expected of developers in line with the emerging legislation, British Standard and policy.
2. Ensuring developers provide ecological information, proportionate to scale and impacts, showing how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied and also to evidence how net biodiversity gains are to be achieved and integrated into the development.
3. Upskill our Planning staff by way of training and briefings, and knowledge sharing sessions.
4. Work closely with partners including SDNP etc adopting shared goals such as BNG and a landscape scale approach to planning and development.
5. We will work with local partners to ensure that Nature Recovery Network areas described in section 3 will inform off site BNG delivery.

5. Promoting biodiversity understanding throughout the council

There is a need for coherent and integrated understanding and due process to ensure current and future biodiversity duties are being meaningfully met, such as the current Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Section 40: ‘A public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’

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We will:

1. Engage with all areas of the council to identify and review where adjustments and improvements can be made for biodiversity. This will be by way of setting up meetings with heads of departments and their teams, attending team meetings and understanding current practices and processes.
2. As and where relevant, facilitate and / or provide training and briefings to staff at team meetings or as standalone sessions.
3. Signpost and promote, by way of better internal and external communications including the website, standard guidance and information on biodiversity.

6. Nature based solutions and ecosystem services

The rehabilitation and restoration of nature, through nature-based solutions (NBSs) is vital to recover 'services' that ecosystems offer.

Nature based interventions, through changes in land / sea use and investment in natural assets, will be fundamental in reversing ecological declines and delivering net zero, as well as delivering a wide range of ecosystem service benefits for example carbon storage, flood alleviation, human wellbeing and biodiversity.

Land-based NBSs can be divided into two main groups of strategies: soil solutions and landscape solutions. Soil solutions aim to enhance the soil health and soil functions through which local eco-system services will be maintained or restored. Landscape solutions mainly focus on reducing flood risk, increasing soil moisture and reducing droughts and soil erosion to achieve sustainability.

According to the [Natural England report on carbon storage and sequestration](#) published on 20 April 2021:

The natural environment can play a vital role in tackling the climate crisis as healthy ecosystems take up and store a significant amount of carbon in soils, sediments and vegetation. Alongside many other negative impacts, the destruction and degradation of natural habitats has resulted in the direct loss of carbon stored within them. Restoring natural systems can start to reverse this damage at the same time as supporting and enhancing biodiversity, alongside delivering co-benefits for climate change adaptation, soil health, water management and society.

We will seek to deploy nature-based solutions as a mainstream approach in all appropriate programmes and projects within the action plan at Appendix 2.

Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy



Photo: Pollinator friendly wildflowers in an urban roadside environment

In 2019, Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council adopted a new Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy. Both should be considered very much linked to this strategy, as their overall aims and goals are to achieve greater biodiversity across our areas.

Pesticide Policy

The Joint Pesticide Policy explains how both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council are committed to working towards a pesticide free environment.

Pesticides will only be used as a last resort, and alternative non pesticide methods will always be used as a first choice wherever possible.

Pollinator Strategy

The Joint Pollinator Strategy looks at managing all council-owned land, and other land wherever possible, with a view to making it as pollinator friendly as possible.

This includes:

- maintaining our nature areas and downland in ways that are sympathetic to pollinators.
- pollinator friendly species selection for planting, including tree planting.
- reduced use of pesticides, with use of a pesticide-free alternatives.
- the creation and support of increasing planted wildflower areas in parks and verges.
- undertaking surveys on the reserves to monitor biodiversity including invertebrates.
- community work and education events on our downland and reserves.

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The above Policy and Strategy will be used in partnership with this Biodiversity Strategy to lead on how the councils manage all of their land including open space, parks, nature areas and housing areas in the future, and how work is specified in any new grounds maintenance contracts or to in-house teams.

Our councils recognise that this strategy needs to be all embracing, and not just confined to the direct work of the councils. Examples of where pesticides have caused concerns that affect us all include the use of pesticides that are used to treat cats and dogs for fleas. These are causing widespread contamination of English Rivers – scientists have found two neurotoxic pesticides (fipronil and imidacloprid) in river samples in concentrations that far exceed accepted safe limits. Both chemicals are banned in agricultural use due to their toxic effects on birds, fish and mammals.

However, they are still used in veterinary flea products and are applied to millions of dogs and cats in the UK. The highest levels of pollution were found immediately downstream of wastewater treatment works, suggesting they are passing from treated pets to the environment via household drains.

As part of this strategy we will, wherever possible, highlight concerns and provide information to the public as necessary, to help in the education and learning process.



Photo: Use of environmentally friendly hot foam to remove weeds

Our councils will...

1. Employ sympathetic land management techniques in accordance with our recently-adopted pesticide policy and pollinator strategy, widening the basic principles to increase biodiversity on all council-owned estate to stimulate natural habitats, such as identifying verges / areas that would benefit from reduced mowing and wildflower management regimes, reduction in hedge cutting, maintenance of our woodland stock, maintaining chalk grass lands

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and understanding and educating that nature rich and ecologically productive areas are not always neat and tidy.

2. LDC will work in partnership, including with Newhaven Port Authority, to promote environmental protection and management of Newhaven Coastal areas including Tide Mills and the area west of the Ouse.
3. LDC will endeavour to protect and enhance the shoreline and nearshore waters in line with national and international legislation to secure the future of the region's unique range and abundance of marine life.
4. LDC and EBC will support the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority in its lead role in managing inshore waters in the Beachy Head West and East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) including trawling limitation and exclusion byelaws and 'no-take' zones.
5. LDC will promote the use and study of Castle Hill LNR in conjunction with the MCZ Education Zone at Newhaven bordering Castle Hill.
6. We will encourage and support tree planting, and other natural habitat creation measures, to improve biodiversity, store carbon, protect against flooding and generally enhance the environment which can benefit our physical health and mental well-being.
7. We will manage our parks and open spaces in a way that encourages and promotes wildlife. For instance, to encourage hedgehogs (which are becoming extinct) we will provide suitable areas for hibernation, ensure areas are checked prior to clearing leaves, etc, make operatives aware of the risks of strimmers and other machinery, make Bonfire Societies aware of the risks that hedgehogs could enter their bonfires and create hedgehog friendly parks. The banning of pesticides and use of some slug pellets has already helped our wildlife.
8. We will ensure that our biodiversity objectives are taken fully into account when looking at devolving land to third parties.
9. We will ensure that biodiversity is key when developing any new contract for the grounds maintenance of our land, and to existing contracts wherever possible.
10. Review and adapt, as necessary, management prescriptions on a frequent basis in line with new research and emerging technologies such as pesticide alternatives etc. Promote and share good practice / knowledge using social media, networks and other communication channels.
11. Work with our partners, including our town and parish councils, to encourage them to adopt our policies on the land that they own and manage, as well as on land that we manage on their behalf.
12. Encourage academia to view council assets as a learning and research resource, for example inviting the University of Sussex to consider our sites for student research into flora and fauna.

Appendix 1: List of Partner Groups

Strategic Partners - working on policy/strategy direction etc.

Sussex Wildlife Trust (inc FLOW project)
Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (inc LWS initiative)
Wildflower Lewes
Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere
Sussex Local Nature Partnership
ESCC (Rights of Way)

Development Planning partners

Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre
ESCC
South Downs National Park

Land management (nature reserves) partners

South Downs National Park (Volunteer Ranger Service)
Brighton Conservation Volunteers
Castle Hill Group
Railway Land Wildlife Trust
Newick Roots
Friends of Markstakes Common
Friends of Landport Bottom
Newhaven Town Council (Riverside Park)
Lewes Town Council (Landport Bottom)
Plumpton College (Landport Bottom)
A Turner and Sons (Railway Land)
Eastern South Downs Farm Cluster
St Nicholas Centre - (Adults with learning difficulties)
ESCC Dutch Elm Disease
Marine Conservation Society

Nature reserves information partners

Castle Hill Group
Friends of Markstakes Common
Sussex Botanical Recording Society
Sussex Ornithological Society
Sussex Moth Group
Bat Conservation Trust
Sussex Amphibian and Reptile Group
Wild Thymes Natural History Group
Friends of the Old Brickfield
Friends of Landport Bottom
Railway Land Wildlife Trust
Sussex University
British Bryological Society (Sussex group)

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Community engagement partners

Castle Hill Group
South Downs National Park
Friends of the Old Brickfield
Priory School
National Coast watch Institution
Friends of Lewes (inc. Tree Committee)
Sussex Moth Group
Bat Conservation Trust
National Trust (Changing Chalk)
Sussex Community Development Association (irregular)
Greenhavens
Seahaven Academy
Talking Trees (Railway land)

Misc.

Seaford Natural History Society
Whitbread Hollow Bird Ringing Station
Sussex Ornithological Society
Sussex Botanical Society
Sussex Peregrine Group
South Downs Society
Woodland Trust