



# NORWICH City Council

**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 16/11/2022

**Report title:** **Biodiversity Strategy 2022 -2023 and the Biodiversity Development Plan 2022-2025**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Giles, Cabinet member for community wellbeing

**Report from:** Head of strategy, engagement and culture

**Wards:** All wards.

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**KEY DECISION**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to brief Cabinet on the post-public consultation draft of the Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2023 (hereafter 'the Strategy') and its associated Biodiversity Development Plan 2022-2025 (hereafter 'the Plan'), and to recommend that Cabinet approve the Strategy and Plan for adoption.

## **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that cabinet approve the Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2023 and the Biodiversity Development Plan 2022-2025 for adoption.

## **Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city corporate priority

This report addresses Aim 2, Protect and invest in our parks, green spaces and biodiversity in the Corporate Plan

This priority proposes an activity to publish a new Biodiversity Strategy and to

report annually on its progress.

## Report details

### The Strategy

1. The Strategy, appended to this report, is premised on the following new policy statement:

*Create a city where biodiversity can sustainably recover and thrive, halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030 or sooner*

which updates and strengthens the existing policy statement set out in Annex A of the Environmental Strategy 2020-25 which is

*Protecting and enhancing habitat and biodiversity*

2. It is a citywide strategy which positions the Council as leader; a similar model to the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024. It requires the voluntary contribution of assets and resources of strategic partners and interested parties (defined below) as well as alignment of Council operations.
3. An integrated strategic approach is defined which recognises the need to identify dependences with other internal and external strategies and successfully coordinate/integrate with them. A schedule of strategies with known dependencies is included in the appendix of the Strategy.
4. The need for partnership working is also recognised with two broad types of partner defined. Strategic Partners are organisation with responsibility for significant nature assets e.g. Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Interested Parties are businesses, institutions, VSCEs and residents. These definitions enable targeted communications, engagement, and coordination of action.
5. Regarding management and assurance, the Strategy requires the establishment of a Biodiversity Working Group of Council officers. The Working Group's role is to manage, measure and report biodiversity action and outcomes, principally by means of the Plan, with CLT as the ultimate decision maker. The Working Group has been convened, with 14 officers attending from across the Council to discuss and approve the Plan.
6. The Strategic objectives are:
  - (a) Develop a Nature Recovery Network (hereafter 'NRN') in the city. The NRN comprises:
    - Existing and new nature cores (aka 'hubs') which are areas of highest biodiversity value
    - Nature corridors and stepping stones which allow movement and interaction
    - Restoration areas – areas where biodiversity can be restored

The NRN will be developed using nature assets owned and operated by Strategic Partners, and through the voluntary contributions of, for example, the green spaces around buildings owned/operated by Norwich housing providers, businesses and institutions. Resident's gardens can also be included in the scheme.

The main strategic objective is for the NRN to be significantly complete and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030.

(b) The Strategy requires alignment of council activity including:

- In relation to facilities management, ensuring compliance with legislation concerned with biodiversity protection;
- Reducing negative impacts on biodiversity through measures relating to how the council procures goods and services;
- Reducing interventions in tenants' gardens through changes to the tenancy agreement, to achieve cost savings;
- Rewilding of a significant portion of parks – the rewilding scheme is intended, amongst other objectives, to bring about biodiversity improvement through the intelligent reduction in grounds maintenance, and
- The development of new policies and procedures such as managing Biodiversity Net Gain proposals, which are an obligation and opportunity brought about by the Environment Act 2021;

(c) Other objectives include:

- Reducing heat, drought, flood risk and improving air and water quality, through biodiversity improvement schemes and nature-based solutions;
- Improving wellbeing through improved access to nature;
- Creating educational opportunities;
- Producing food, albeit with the emphasis on biodiversity improvement;
- Enhancing tourism and improving visitor experience, and
- Growing the green economy with regards promoting biodiversity and ensuring alignment between this Strategy and strategies and plans for economic growth

(d) The Strategy recognises the need to flex the detailed design of the NRN according to influences such as the evolution of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging detail around the national NRN.

(e) Important contributions are required from Norfolk County Council, who are obligated by the Environment Act 2021 to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

## **The Plan**

7. The Biodiversity Development Plan (BDP), referred to as the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in previous drafts, is described in the separate and

appended document entitled Biodiversity Development Plan 2022-2025, Structure Process and Programme (hereafter 'the Plan document').

8. The Plan is the principal means by which the Strategy will be delivered. The Plan will flex and evolve according to internal and external conditions, opportunities and constraints, over time.
9. The Plan document gives details around the modus operandi of the Working Group including a set of management tasks required to deliver the Strategy's objectives. It sets out that the Environmental Strategy Team will act as the secretariat of the Working Group and that the Working Group will form a consensus around options for developing and delivering the programme, making recommendations to CLT for comment/approval. The Working Group has been convened and has met to discuss and agree the content of the Plan document; members of the Group are detailed in part 15.
10. The Plan document also discusses funding based on the terms set in the Financial and Resources section below.
11. With regards to the Structure of the Plan, it comprises a programme of interdependent and time-based tasks, scheduled on a rolling three year ahead basis; hence the initial iteration of Plan is dated 2022-2025. The Plan is structured into the following series of thematic workstreams:
  - Working Group administration and reporting
  - Funding and budget management
  - Town and Country planning
  - Council operations
  - Species & nature recovery strategies
  - Biodiversity measurement
  - Engagement with Interested Parties, including residents
  - Promotion of education opportunities
  - Engagement with Strategic Partners to develop the NRN

Numerous tasks are proposed under each workstream with detail of the internal team or external body who is nominated to undertake the tasks.

12. In terms of timescales, the tasks are organised into four broad stages:
  - (a) A communication and engagement stage, where existing and potential new nature assets are identified for the development of the NRN, as well as VCSE management and labour resources;
  - (b) A mapping and coordination stage where existing and potential new nature assets are mapped/prioritised into a cohesive NRN to ensure sufficient coverage to meet the objectives of the Strategy. This stage also coordinates the Local Nature Recovery Strategy work of Norfolk County Council and identifies further opportunities to create, connect and enhance habitats to increase species diversity and abundance;
  - (c) A programme development stage where action and funding plans are developed for new nature assets, and

- (d) An implementation period where new and existing nature assets are created, connected and enhanced.

Broadly speaking 2022 and 2023 will see the delivery of enabling tasks, with 2024 being when mobilisation and implementation begin, although for specific tasks, implementation will already be underway.

13. Delivery of individual tasks and projects, which are incumbent upon the Council to deliver, require funding and action plans to be developed and signed off according to established decision-making protocols.

## **Consultation**

14. Key to the success of the Strategy and Plan are effective Council leadership and the coordination of Strategic Partners and Interested Parties (defined in part 4). An initial physical consultation event was held at the Halls in November 2021 with ongoing online engagement, via the Get Talking Norwich platform, providing further ideas. These initial consultation exercises gave rise to the key themes and outcomes necessary for the development of the new Strategy and Plan.

15. A further consultation exercise was undertaken in August 2022 allowing members of the public, Interested Parties and Strategic Partners to provide views on a draft version of the Strategy via the online Get Talking Norwich platform. Feedback was strongly supportive:

- The consultation received 90 formal responses on Get Talking Norwich, with a further 10 by email. Engagement on social media was also positive.
- Alongside the consultation responses, a total of 1,076 individuals visited the Get Talking Norwich page and were aware of the Strategy, 295 of which downloaded the Strategy in pdf format.
- 11 Strategic Partners and Interested Parties provided views, including: Norwich Friends of the Earth; the Norfolk Wildlife Trust; Norfolk County Council Natural Environment Team; Flagship Group.
- >80% of responses strongly agreed or agreed that the new statement (see part 1) was sufficient.
- >80% of responses strongly agreed or agreed that a Nature Recovery Network is the best way to support biodiversity.
- >90% of responses strongly agreed or agreed that a portion of our parks should be rewilded.

Feedback from subject matter experts has improved some of the phraseology in the Strategy and suggestions, which have been adopted into the latest draft, include principles around food production and educational outcomes.

16. Internally, the following teams have been consulted with regarding both the Strategy and Development Plan:

- Environmental Strategy Team
- Finance

- Planning and Regulatory Services
- Environment Services
- NCSL
- Citywide Services
- Fringe Project
- Housing and Community Safety.

## Implications

### Financial and resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.

17. Regarding financial and resource implications, the following principles are set out in the Strategy (a) and Plan (b):

(a) The Council shall.....*Manage financial decisions associated with the NRN in line with our Corporate Plan priorities and internal planning processes.*

(b) With regards Council operations..... *the BDP will be funded using existing and agreed budgets and new funds from internal spend to save schemes, external sources including grants from government, charitable bodies, Community Infrastructure Levy, and the private sector.*

18. Although not explicit, the Strategy and Plan aims to create cost savings and biodiversity improvements, which are mutually inclusive, with regard to specific service areas. This will be achieved by intelligently aligning and coordinating action and sharing knowledge across Council teams, by means of the Working Group. The Strategy recognises the need to integrate with the Economic Development Strategy to promote the growth of the green economy.

19. With regards external funding and resources to develop the NRN, the following sources have been identified:

- Management and labour resources of VCSEs in the city
- Funds leveraged by Strategic Partners
- Grants from government and charitable bodies
- Private sector Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) funding, such as the recent purchase of Sweet Briar Marshes by Norfolk Wildlife Trust, supported by Aviva.

20. The Climate Commission is producing a paper to identify funding sources for both biodiversity and climate action projects.

## Legal

21. Nplaw have confirmed that there are no legal implications to adopting the Strategy and Development Plan. The Environment Act requires a Nature Recovery Strategy to be in place, and so the risk is in *not* adopting a strategy.

## Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	NA
Health, social and economic impact	This strategy is intended to have a beneficial impact on health
Crime and disorder	NA
Children and adults safeguarding	NA
Environmental impact	The strategy will enhance the city's environment, creating positive impacts by improving biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change

## Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Political and reputational risks relating to the rewilding of parks and changes to NCSL grounds maintenance.	Consequences are political and reputational.	<p>The rewilding of portions of our parks has the potential to have both positive and negative political and reputational risks.</p> <p>Thorough public consultation has already been undertaken, demonstrating existing strong public support for rewilding (part 15).</p> <p>Close engagement with local communities on any rewilding scheme would need to be undertaken to ensure local buy-in.</p> <p>Effective communication with all relevant parties will need to be undertaken to convey the environmental and social benefits of rewilding and to mitigate potential risks.</p>

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls required</b>
Delivery risks; if communities do not want parks to be rewilded justifying this would be difficult.	Delivery of the strategy could be impeded.	<p>Close engagement with local communities on any rewilding scheme would need to be undertaken to ensure local buy-in.</p> <p>Effective communication with all relevant parties will need to be undertaken to convey the environmental and social benefits of rewilding and to mitigate potential risks.</p>
National policy context risk, relating to changing priorities from central government affecting the priorities of key stakeholders.	Delivery of the strategy could be impeded.	<p>While the extent to which we can influence priorities from central government is limited, by continuing close communication and collaboration with local partners we can attempt to ensure that these partner's priorities continue to align with the Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>Staying on top of policy news and developments from central government will allow the council to remain responsive and ensure that plans can be adapted if necessary and/or feasible.</p>

### **Other options considered**

22.No alternative recommendations.

### **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

23.It is recommended that cabinet approve the Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2023 and the Biodiversity Development Plan 2022-2025 for adoption. These documents set out the Council's approach to tackling the biodiversity crisis and adoption allows the council to begin this work.

### **Background papers:**

None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Biodiversity Strategy 2022–2032

Appendix 2 Biodiversity Development Plan 2022-2025

Appendix 3 Biodiversity Development Plan – Indicative Gantt Chart



**Contact officer:**

**Name:** Phil Hunt, Environmental Strategy Manager

**Telephone number:**

**Email address:** [philhunt@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:philhunt@norwich.gov.uk)



If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.

**Norwich City Council**  
**Biodiversity Strategy 2022 – 2032**

**Final Draft for Cabinet**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Foreword by Councillor Adam Giles	3
2. Executive Summary	5
3. The Need and Context for this New Biodiversity Strategy	6
4. Council Biodiversity Policy and the 2040 City Vision	6
5. Taking an Integrated Strategic Approach	7
6. Working in Partnership	7
7. The Biodiversity Strategy and Development Plan	8
8. Management and Assurance	8
9. Consultation and Communication	8
10. The Strategic Objectives	9
11. Appendix	11

# 1. Foreword

Foreword by Councillor Adam Giles - Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing

- 1.1 Norwich City Council has declared Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies. This new Biodiversity Strategy and its associated Development Plan are a key part of delivering against the priorities and ambitions set within the Council's overarching Environmental Strategy 2020-25.
- 1.2 We are rightly proud of our beautiful, unique and diverse city and its natural environment - with many hidden green space gems, heathland, parks, woodland, allotments and waterways, providing Green Flag award-winning places for us to appreciate. This habitat is of course also home to a variety of wildlife and nature, whose survival is dependent on human behaviour. In turn our future prosperity is reliant on biodiversity being able to thrive.
- 1.3 Since the council's previous biodiversity strategy was published in 2002, significant efforts have been made to improve the quality of our local nature reserves and wildlife sites. These include Green Flag Status for Eaton Park, Waterloo Park, and Mousehold Heath, as well as management plans in place for those sites with prioritised habitats and species. £300,000 in CIL funding was secured to invest in the creation of new habitats at Kett's Heights to boost biodiversity.
- 1.4 At Mousehold Heath a grant of £30,600 was secured from Natural England for a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement to improve the quantity and quality of heathland and acid grassland, nationally important habitats. This work has led to the identification of: a number of scarce and threatened bee and wasp species; a number of butterfly species, such as small copper and green hairstreak; and a number of moth species, including true lover's knott, heath rustic, and beautiful yellow underwing. The installation of bentonite clay linings at the Vinegar Pond and the Mustard Pond have seen a good number of dragonfly and damselfly species prosper, including the Norfolk Hawker, a nationally threatened and scarce Red Data book species.
- 1.5 Exceptional partnership work and valuable projects have been delivered with our environmentally passionate community and key stakeholders. A biodiversity event held at St Andrew's & Blackfriars Hall on 30th November 2021, highlighted a vast range of additional ideas that we can look to take forward together. More than ever we need to work collectively and also look to draw on the experience of the Norwich 2040 City Vision partnership to reach out to all sectors of our community.
- 1.6 Our broader Environmental Strategy (2020-25) complements this Biodiversity Strategy through provision for reduced carbon emissions and air pollution.

- 1.7 The City Council has an important leadership role to play as an anchor institution in creating sustainable communities where biodiversity can thrive. Positive action through innovative management techniques of parks and open spaces, excellent conservation of our natural areas, and ambitious expectations of housing developers all support our goal to create a place where our residents, visitors and the environment can all flourish.
- 1.8 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to local green spaces and nature, both for physical health and mental wellbeing. Biodiversity must be protected and enhanced if Norwich is to remain an attractive place to live and work for our residents.
- 1.9 In order to maintain and improve biodiversity across the city, action will need to be taken at every level. From individuals to large organisations. From gardens to our road verges, our green spaces, to our industrial estates and new developments. We need to be much more connected to, and aware of, the nature that surrounds us, our impact upon it, the benefits it brings, and take the opportunities to support biodiversity available to us.
- 1.10 We have set ourselves ambitious targets and plans and pledge to use our planning powers to produce Biodiversity Net Gain on all redevelopments, taking a genuinely radical approach to sustainable development that enhances biodiversity.
- 1.11 It will be equally important to work closely with and influence key partners and stakeholders, including Norfolk County Council, who have responsibility for transport, highways and verges, lighting and education in our area. We will continue to strive to lead by example in positively managing our own treasured and unique habitats.

I am delighted we are continuing to demonstrate our commitment to put biodiversity at the centre of what Norwich City Council does, support our wider aim of responding effectively to the Climate Emergency, and lead on educating us all in the immense value of our biodiversity being able to prosper.

*A. Giles*

Councillor Adam Giles - Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing



## 2. Executive Summary

This new Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032 (hereafter ‘the Strategy’) and its associated Biodiversity Development Plan (hereafter ‘the Plan’) set out the Council’s comprehensive and ambitious response to redress the Biodiversity Emergency it declared in 2019, as well as delivering on the 2040 City Vision commitment of ‘*Protecting and maintaining our green and open spaces to improve biodiversity*’.

The Strategy is premised on a new biodiversity policy statement, which is to ‘*create a city where biodiversity can sustainably recover and thrive, halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030 or sooner*’, affirming the Council’s commitment to lead and coordinate nature recovery in the City. By aligning the Council’s own operations and collaborating with organisations responsible for significant nature assets and other interested parties (including Norwich businesses, institutions, VSCEs and residents), a new Nature Recovery Network (NRN) will be developed across the city.

The main objective is for the NRN to be significantly complete, to halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030. The development of the NRN will be guided by the principles of the Lawton Report<sup>1</sup>, to identify, create, protect, connect and enhance diverse blue<sup>1</sup> and green natural assets.

The NRN will comprise nature cores, such as existing wildlife sites and parkland, connected by nature corridors which may take the form of designated streets, green spaces on and around buildings, and highway verges. Opportunities to create stepping stones within the network will be sought in the form of smaller green spaces in the built environment, such as residents’ gardens, on a voluntary basis.

Other objectives exist around climate change mitigation and adaption, health and wellbeing, educational benefits, food production, visitor experience, and the growth of the green economy.

The Strategy acknowledges the need to successfully integrate with the *national* NRN<sup>2</sup> and other local strategies and plans, as well as being evidence based with measurable outcomes. Management, assurance and reporting will be provided by a new Biodiversity Working Group comprising officers of the Council.

The Biodiversity Working Group is responsible for delivering the Plan, which sets out in a separate document, interdependent tasks categorised according to a series of thematic workstreams. The Plan is based on a three-year ahead rolling horizon, with engagement, planning and integration tasks notionally being undertaken during 2023, and implementation of natural asset development tasks from 2024 onwards.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pertaining to surface water assets such as ponds, broads, rivers and streams

<sup>2</sup> A requirement of the Environment Act 2021

### **3. The Need and Context for this New Biodiversity Strategy**

The paragraphs below firstly define biodiversity, and then go on to set out the need and context for this new Biodiversity Strategy

- 2.1 Biodiversity is the collective term for the variety and abundance of forms of life found in an area, including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms like bacteria. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web to maintain, balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive including, food, oxygen, clean air, clean water, medicine, and shelter<sup>ii</sup>.
- 2.2 The current global loss of biodiversity is unprecedented in human history. The 2020 global Living Planet Index shows an average 68% fall in populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish between 1970 and 2016<sup>iii</sup>.
- 2.3 Thriving biodiversity and sustainable ecosystems are essential for our survival, wellbeing and our local economy. We are inextricably connected with nature; we are part of the ecosystem and not separate from it.
- 2.4 In response to this, Norwich City Council (hereafter ‘the Council’) declared a climate and environmental emergency in September of 2019.
- 2.5 The Environment Act 2021<sup>iv</sup> (hereafter ‘the new Environment Act’) aims (amongst other things) to halt species decline and improve our natural environment. Part of Central Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>v</sup>, it sets out a framework for developing Nature Recovery Networks, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), Protected Site and Species Conservation Strategies and gives councils new powers to ensure 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) is achieved in new developments.
- 2.6 Norwich’s tree canopy cover is higher than the national average<sup>vi</sup> with the city providing generous levels of open spaces, two river valleys, extensive undeveloped flood meadows and marshes and other significant habitats and species. This strategy aims to build on the existing knowledge of Norwich’s biodiversity and the success of existing strategies, management plans, and arrangements.

### **4. Council Biodiversity Policy and the 2040 City Vision**

Taking action to redress the climate and environmental emergencies are key policy priorities for the Council and form central planks of the Norwich 2040 City Vision (hereafter ‘the Vision’).

- 4.1 Existing policy statements include:

a) Environmental Policy

Appendix A of the Environmental Strategy 2020-25 states that the Council will monitor its resource for

*Protecting and enhancing habitat and biodiversity*

b) Development Plan Policies, which are listed in Appendix Section 11.1

#### 4.2 New Policy Statement

The following *new* policy statement has been agreed as part of the process of producing this Strategy. This statement supersedes the previous statement made in Appendix A of the Environmental Strategy 2020-25<sup>vii</sup>:

*Create a city where biodiversity can sustainably recover and thrive, halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030 or sooner*

#### 4.3 One of the 5 themes of The Vision is to create a *Liveable City*, which includes:

*Protecting and maintaining our green and open spaces to improve biodiversity*

#### 4.4 The aims and objectives of this Strategy describe how Council policy and the Vision will be effectively and reliably delivered upon, and how legislation will be adhered to.

## 5. Taking an Integrated Strategic Approach

To redress the environmental emergency, it is recognised that this Strategy shall successfully identify dependencies with other associated Council strategies and those of relevant external actors and ensure their successful integration. Associated policies, strategies and plans are detailed in Appendix Section 11.2.

## 6. Working in Partnership and with Interested Parties

To deliver the strategic objectives set out in Section 10 below, partnerships shall be established with key external organisations concerned with the management of significant nature assets, strategic planning and funding to improve biodiversity; these organisations are referred to as *Strategic Partners*.



The Council shall also engage with other parties to deliver the objectives, including charities, VSCEs<sup>3</sup>, business, institutions and residents; referred to herein as *Interested Parties*.

A register of Strategic Partners and Interested Parties is proposed in Appendix Section 11.3, and this shall be maintained and developed for the purposes of delivering the Plan.

## **7. Biodiversity Strategy Document Aims**

The aims of this Strategy document are to set out:

- a) The generalities of the Council's approach to delivering its biodiversity policy commitments;
- b) How relevant parts of the 2040 City Vision will be realised and
- c) How the Council will ensure its duties, with regards biodiversity, are met in a coordinated and effective way.

It is envisaged that this Strategy is reviewed and amended every 5 years to ensure it continues meet its strategic aims, or as required.

## **8. Management and Assurance**

- 8.1 The implementation of Biodiversity Strategy and Development Plan will be managed, measured, updated and communicated by the Council's Biodiversity Working Group, as part its Environmental Management System assurance arrangements.
- 8.2 The Biodiversity Working Group shall comprise officers of the Council with reporting lines to the Corporate Leadership Team, Portfolio Holders and/or Cabinet, as required.
- 8.3 The Biodiversity Working Group shall maintain registers concerning environmental aspects, compliance, risks and opportunities, funding opportunities, key strategic partners and interested parties.

## **9. Consultation and Communication**

This Strategy is informed by a comprehensive consultation exercise including members of the public, officers and members of Norwich City Council, subject matter

---

<sup>3</sup> Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises

experts, partner organisations and interested parties. Communication of this Strategy will be managed by the Biodiversity Working Group.

## 10. The Strategic Objectives

This section describes how the Council will meet its policy commitments to address the environmental emergency with regards biodiversity, and how it will realise the relevant parts of the Vision.

The strategic objectives are:

- 10.1 Develop a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) in the city to bring about a sustained recovery in biodiversity. The city's NRN shall be part of the *national* NRN as set out in the new Environment Act, the proposed aims of which are summarised in Appendix section 11.4.

Norwich's NRN shall:

- a. Identify, connect, protect, create and enhance diverse blue and green habitats, in order to promote species recovery<sup>viii</sup>;
- b. Recognise the potential habitat value of all non-built space as well as potential habitats which may exist within the curtilage of buildings;
- c. Consist of nature cores such as existing wildlife sites and parkland, connected by nature corridors which may take the form of designated parts of the city including streets, green spaces on and around buildings and highway verges. Opportunities to create stepping stones within the network will be sought in the form of smaller green spaces in the built environment, such as back gardens and smaller green areas<sup>ix</sup>, and
- d. Norwich's NRN will be significantly complete and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030.

The NRN shall be enabled by, or comprise, the following elements:

- e. The Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy which shall be a principal driver of the NRN in the Greater Norwich Area;
- f. The *national* NRN may, when details become known, require change to the requirements of the city's NRN to ensure alignment. It is acknowledged that implementation of the National NRN is a duty of Norfolk County Council;

- g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies and other mechanisms of the New Environment Act, to establish species and place-based priorities;
- h. Nature assets owned and/or managed by partner organisations such as nature reserves;
- i. A significant portion of the parks, open spaces and undeveloped land owned and managed by the Council;
- j. Existing buildings owned and managed by the Council with regards the potential for green roofs, balconies and green areas adjacent to buildings;
- k. Existing buildings owned and managed by commercial entities, contributing on a voluntary basis, with regards the potential for green roofs, balconies and green areas adjacent to buildings;
- l. Existing buildings owned and managed by members of the public, contributing on a voluntary basis, with regards the potential for green roofs, balconies, back gardens and green areas adjacent to buildings, and
- m. New developments providing at least 10% biodiversity net gain, through either onsite or offsite arrangements.

10.2 Apply evidence and science-based approaches to improving biodiversity, by:

- a. Establishing measurable key indicators using methodologies which are supported by recognised science;
- b. Recording biodiversity baselines and subsequent ecology change using surveys and recognised methodologies, to measure the success of this Strategy and related activity, and to inform the evolution of future iterations of this Strategy;
- c. Promoting sustainable ecosystems through recognised ecology theory and practice whilst also enabling innovation, and by recognising the need for ecology to adapt to climate change, and
- d. Developing approaches which minimise the impacts of climate change.

This objective is informed, in part, by the guidance set out in Appendix D of DEFRA's Measuring environmental change: outcome indicator framework the 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>x</sup>

- 10.3 In the planning, development and maintenance of the NRN, the Council shall seek to:
- a. Create new policies and strategies as necessary to deliver the NRN and meet new statutory requirements such as realising at least 10% biodiversity net gain in new developments<sup>xi</sup>;
  - b. Achieve savings and develop revenue streams aligned with biodiversity improvement, such as through nature-based solution offerings and off-site biodiversity net gain arrangements for new development;
  - c. Reduce negative impacts on biodiversity through measures relating to the design and operation of its buildings and other assets;
  - d. Reduce negative impacts on biodiversity through measures relating to how the council procures goods and services;
  - e. Reduce heat, drought, flood risk and improve air and water quality, through biodiversity improvement schemes and nature-based solutions;
  - f. Improve wellbeing through improved access to nature;
  - g. Create educational opportunities
  - h. Produce food, albeit with the emphasis on biodiversity improvement
  - i. Enhance tourism and improve visitor experience;
  - j. Grow the green economy with regards promoting biodiversity and ensuring alignment between this Strategy and strategies and plans for economic growth;
  - k. Deliver our policy commitments, plans and the relevant sections of the Vision in relation to this Strategy and Development Plan;
  - l. Act as Leader to co-create opportunity and coordinate action and external funding and investment, by proactively and collaboratively engaging with partners and interested parties, and
  - m. Manage financial decisions associated with Norwich City Council's NRN in line with our Corporate Plan priorities and internal planning processes.

A Biodiversity Development Plan will be produced setting out how each of these objectives will be realised.

## 11. Appendix

### 11.1 Development Management Policies and Plans

#### a) Current Development Management Policies

##### Policy DM3 Delivering high quality design

All new development will be expected to make appropriate provision for both the protection of existing and the provision of new green infrastructure as an integral part of the overall design which complements and enhances the development.

##### Policy DM6 Natural environmental assets

Development is expected to take all reasonable opportunities to avoid harm to and protect and enhance the natural environment of Norwich and its setting, including both sites and species

##### Policy DM7 Trees and development

Trees and significant hedge and shrub masses should be retained as an integral part of the design of development except where their long-term survival would be compromised by their age or physical condition or there are exceptional and overriding benefits in accepting their loss.

#### b) Future Proposed Development Plan Policies

##### Greater Norwich Local Plan

The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) is in two parts - the Strategy and Sites Plan. The Strategy outlines the broad approach to housing and jobs growth, along with policies to ensure sustainability, protect our environment and provide infrastructure.

The Sites Plan identifies the sites which we propose to allocate to meet housing and employment needs to 2038, as well as the allocations we propose to carry forward from the current Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk local plans. At this point the Sites Plan excludes villages within South Norfolk which will be addressed through a separate housing sites allocation document and will form part of the development plan for the area

##### Supplementary Planning Document

A supplementary planning document will be produced to give guidance to developers around the requirement for at least 10% biodiversity net gain, currently expected at the end of 2023.

## 11.2 Associated Policies, Strategies and Plans

### a) Associated Policies, Strategies and Action Plans owned by Norwich City Council

- Environmental Commitment Policy Statement
- Environmental Strategy
- Environmental Action Plan
- Strategic Asset Management Framework March 2022
- Asset management strategy for housing
- Parks and open spaces
- Allotments and cemeteries
- Trees
- Pesticide use
- Nutrient Neutrality
- Climate change adaption
- Carbon management plan
- Water reduction
- Waste reduction and recycling

### b) Policies, Strategies and Plans owned by external actors

- Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan
- Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS)
- National Planning Policy Framework<sup>xii</sup>
- HM Government 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>xiii</sup>
- River Wensum Strategy
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Species Conservation Strategies
- Protected Site Strategies
- Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework
- The Broads Plan 2022-2027
- Water Resources East Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan 2022

- The outputs of the Good Economy Commission

### 11.3 Proposed Strategic Partners and Interested Parties

<b>Strategic Partners</b>
<i>Natural and built asset owners/decision makers</i>
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership
Norwich Fringe Project
Broadland District Council and South Norfolk District Council
Breckland Council
Broads Authority
Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Woodland Trust
RSBP
The National Trust
Broadland Housing Association
Cotman Housing Association
Clarion Housing
Flagship Housing Association
Orbit Housing Association
Orwell Housing Association
Saffron Housing
Sage Homes
<i>Strategic Planning and Funding Organisations</i>
The Council Executive, Administration and Councillors
River Wensum Strategy Partnership
Norwich City Vision Partnership
Norfolk Strategic Planning Group
Greater Norwich Growth Board
2040 City Vision Business Leaders' Group

<b>Interested Parties</b>
<i>Local Interested Parties</i>

Residents
Children and Young People
Biodiversity Champions
Citizen Scientists
Community groups with an interest in biodiversity including:
Mousehold Heath Defenders
BTCV in Norwich
The Plantation Garden Committee
Greenhouse Trust
The Norwich Over the Water Group
King Street Neighbours
Friends of Train Wood
Friends of West Earlham Woods
Friends of Strawberry Field
LTC Green Spaces
Norfolk Rivers Trust
Norfolk and Norwich Naturalist Society
Friends of Earlham Cemetery
Faith Groups
The Floral Project Scrapbox
The Island Community Group
Green Care Network
The Norwich Society
Schools, Colleges and Higher Education Institutions
The Council Executive, Administration and Councillors
2040 City Vision Business Leaders' Group
Norwich City Services Ltd
Garden Centres
University of East Anglia
Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership
Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service
River Wensum Strategy Partnership
Norwich City Vision Partnership
Norfolk Strategic Planning Group



Wild East
Greater Norwich Growth Board
Norwich Climate Change Commission
Norfolk Chambers of Commerce Climate Leaders Group
Norwich Business Improvement District
Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership
Representation from the Greater Norwich Sport & Physical Activity Strategy
<i>Campaign Groups</i>
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace
Extinction Rebellion
<i>Regional and National Interested Parties</i>
Water Resource East
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Office for Environmental Protection
Natural England
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
Forestry England

#### 11.4 The National Nature Recovery Network

The *national* Nature Recovery Network proposed aims are:

- Halt the decline in species abundance by 2030;
- Increase species abundance by at least 10% by 2042, compared to 2030 levels<sup>xiv</sup>;
- Improve the England-level GB Red List Index for species extinction risk by 2042, compared to 2022 levels<sup>xiv</sup>;
- Restore 75% of protected sites on land (including freshwaters) to favourable condition so nature can thrive<sup>xiv</sup>;
- Create or restore 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites by 2042, compared to 2022 levels<sup>xiv</sup>;
- Recover threatened and iconic animal and plant species by providing more, diverse and better-connected habitats;

- Support work to increase woodland cover and
- Achieve a range of environmental, economic and social benefits, such as carbon capture, flood management, clean water, pollination and recreation.

---

<sup>i</sup> *Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological networks*, 2010, Professor John Lawton

<sup>ii</sup> Adapted from WWF link here [What is biodiversity? | Pages | WWF \(worldwildlife.org\)](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Living Planet Index link here [Living Planet Index](#)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/world-leading-environment-act-becomes-law> and

<sup>v</sup> 25 Year Environment Plan link here [25 Year Environment Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>vi</sup> As indicated by the UK Ward Canopy Cover interactive map at

<https://forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d8c253ab17e1412586d9774d1a09fa07>

<sup>vii</sup> [Foreword – portfolio holder | Environmental strategy 2020-25 | Norwich City Council](#)

<sup>viii</sup> Blue and Green means pertaining to land and water based natural assets

<sup>ix</sup> Concepts taken from *Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological networks*, 2010, Professor John Lawton

<sup>x</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/925779/25-yep-indicators-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925779/25-yep-indicators-2019.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> This provision is linked to the adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan

<sup>xii</sup> [15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>xiii</sup> [25 Year Environment Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>xiv</sup> At the time of writing this target has been proposed in a consultation exercise by the Department of Food, Rural Affairs and Agriculture (DEFRA) [Consultation on environmental targets - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

**Norwich City Council**

**Biodiversity Development Plan**

**2022 – 2025**

**Structure, Process and Programme**

**Final Draft for Cabinet**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. The Requirement for a Biodiversity Development Plan (BDP)	3
2. The Requirement for a Biodiversity Working Group	3
3. BDP Funding	4
4. BDP Structure	5
4.1 BDP Thematic Workstreams	5
4.2 BDP Timescales	5
4.2.1 Communication and Engagement Stage	6
4.2.2 Mapping and Coordination Stage	7
4.2.3 Programme Development Stage	7
4.2.4 Implementation, Measuring and Reporting Period	8

## **1. The Requirement for a Biodiversity Development Plan**

The Biodiversity Strategy 2022 - 2032 (hereafter 'the Strategy') calls for the development and implementation of a Biodiversity Action Plan (hereafter the 'BAP'). Feedback from the Strategy's public consultation exercise, undertaken during August of 2022, confirmed the most suitable name for the plan as the Biodiversity Development Plan (hereafter the 'BDP'). The BDP is the principal means of delivering the objectives of the Strategy. This document sets out the structure and processes which guide the establishment and evolution of the BDP.

## **2. The Requirement for a Biodiversity Working Group**

The Strategy also sets out the requirement for a cross directorate Biodiversity Working Group (hereafter the 'Working Group') comprising officers of the Council. The purpose of the Working Group is to develop and implement the BDP, ensure coordination with internal and external stakeholders and provide assurances around the delivery of strategic objectives. With regards decision making, the Working Group's remit is to make recommendations, for CLT's consideration and decision.

Following the public consultation period for the Strategy and BDP, which closed at the end of August 2022, the Environmental Strategy Team initiated its role to act as secretariat to the Working Group, with responsibility for delivering the following tasks:

- Convene a Biodiversity Work Group
- Produce and agree the Terms of Reference
- Establish a compliance register
- Establish an associated strategies & plans register
- Establish a biodiversity aspects<sup>1</sup> register
- Develop funding opportunities register
- Develop a risks and opportunities register
- Develop a budgets baseline & funding strategy
- Develop a reporting KPI dashboard
- Arrange and deliver training to officers
- Recruit a full-time biodiversity officer

---

<sup>1</sup> A register of the ways in which the council impacts biodiversity both positively and negatively

The Working Group was convened in September 2022 and has met to further the detailed development of the Development Plan. Its members currently include representation from the following teams:

- Environmental Strategy Team
- Finance
- Planning and Regulatory Services
- Environment Services
- Norwich City Services Ltd
- Citywide Services
- Fringe Project
- Housing and Community Safety
- Property and Economic Development
- Communications

### **3. BDP Funding**

With regards Council operations and nature assets owned by the Council, the BDP will be funded using existing and agreed budgets and new funds from internal spend to save schemes, external sources including grants from government, charitable bodies, Community Infrastructure Levy, and the private sector. The Council shall manage financial decisions associated with Norwich City Council's NRN in line with our Corporate Plan priorities and internal planning processes.

With regards to tasks relating to council operations, the development of the BDP is premised on the general principle that intelligently managing green spaces *less* intensively brings about improvements in biodiversity, as well as reducing the cost of grounds maintenance. Therefore, it is the Working Group's responsibility to manage existing budgets in such a way to create net savings, where this is a corporate priority, whilst at the same time improving biodiversity.

Three important roles for the Working Group exist with regards funding and budget management:

1. Ensure existing budgets are analysed and intelligently coordinated and applied to deliver the aims of the Strategy, as well as delivering existing priorities and commitments, relating to each specific service area.
2. Develop a strategy to leverage, coordinate and apply external funds

3. Ensure that income from offsite Biodiversity Net Gain agreements is effectively used to deliver long-term improvements in biodiversity.

With regards the funding of nature assets owned and/or developed by others e.g. strategic partners and VCSE groups, obtaining funding is the responsibility of the organisation concerned.

## **4. BDP Structure**

The BDP is structured by means of thematic workstreams and sub-tasks plotted against a calendar with 3-month granularity. The BDP presented is an initial iteration, i.e., a starting point, and will be developed over time to deliver the objectives of the Strategy by responding to contextual needs, conditions, opportunities and legislation.

### **4.1 BDP Thematic Workstreams**

The BDP is structured according to the following overarching workstreams:

- Working Group administration and reporting
- Funding and budget management
- Land use planning
- Council operations
- Species & nature recovery strategies
- Biodiversity measurement
- Engagement with Interested Parties including residents
- Promotion of education opportunities
- Engagement with Strategic Partners

Each workstream encompasses numerous sub-tasks which contribute to the delivery of the strategic objectives. Interdependencies between the subtasks are recognised including with external workstreams and actors.

### **4.2 BDP Timescales**

The initial iteration of the BDP is set out according to a 3-year ahead timeframe, with the 3-year ahead 'rolling' horizon maintained, by the working group, as the plan moves forward. The timescales are based on calendar years or parts thereof.

Each subtask has a proposed timeline which enables coordination and management of interdependences between stakeholders. The timeline for individual tasks is

subject to change depending on constraints, opportunities and interdependencies. Some subtasks will be ongoing, i.e. the timeline set out in the plan denotes the *initiation* of the task to the point where it becomes effective, but the task will continue over time.

The plan is organised, in broad terms, into four stages:

1. A communication and engagement stage, where existing and potential new nature assets are identified for the development of the NRN, as well as VSCE management and labour resources;
2. A mapping and coordination stage where existing and potential new nature assets are mapped/prioritised into a cohesive NRN to ensure sufficient coverage to meet the objectives of the Strategy;
3. A programme development stage where action and funding plans are developed for new nature assets, and
4. An implementation period where new and existing nature assets are created, connected, and enhanced.

A summary of the tasks which fall into each period is set out in the sections below.

#### **4.2.1 Communication and Engagement Stage**

The engagement period is scheduled between November 2022 to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2023. During this period:

- Internal and external stakeholders will be engaged with to initiate the NRN mapping exercise, including, where timescales allow, integration with GNLP<sup>2</sup> & GNGIS<sup>3</sup>, River Wensum Strategy and the national NRN for which Norfolk County Council are nominated lead; although integration can occur at any time.
- A 'Big Biodiversity Workshop' public event for VCSEs, biodiversity champions, citizen scientists and residents will be held to bring together interested parties to generate a schedule of nature assets.
- Strategic Partners will be engaged with to map existing and potential new nature assets.
- Local nature recovery strategies/opportunities for individual habitats and species will be identified, provided by Norfolk County Council, strategic partners and interested parties.

---

<sup>2</sup> Greater Norwich Local Plan

<sup>3</sup> Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Study



- Council stakeholders, by means of the Working Group, will identify existing and potential new nature assets.
- A schedule of VSCE management and labour resources will be produced

#### **4.2.2 Mapping and Coordination Stage**

The mapping and coordination stage falls within quarter 2 and 3 of 2023. The aim of this stage is to take the potential new and existing nature resources identified in the previous stage, and spatially map them into a cohesive NRN. The output of this stage includes:

- A map of existing and new nature *cores* i.e. significant habitats, where biodiversity can thrive, these include initiatives to rewild existing parkland.
- Determination of nature corridors along which biodiversity can thrive, travel and penetrate the higher density areas of the city.
- Determination of significant and smaller informal green spaces and blue assets around buildings, to produce network *stepping stones*.
- Inclusion of the Local Nature Recovery Strategies/opportunities produced/identified by Norfolk County Council, strategic partners and interested parties.
- Cross partner knowledge sharing to optimise biodiversity

The exercise will highlight gaps in the NRN where additional cores, corridors and stepping stones need to be strategically created through further engagement and opportunity generation within the relevant location. The ultimate output of this stage is a map of the NRN showing existing nature assets and a schedule of nature asset development opportunities.

#### **4.2.3 Programme Development Stage**

This stage is scheduled for quarters 3 and 4 of 2023 but will extend into 2024 for larger projects. The schedule of nature asset development opportunities produced in the previous stage will be progressed as follows:

- An action, funding and resource plan (using the resources identified at the engagement stage) will be produced for each development opportunity by the opportunity owner e.g. community group, business, council or resident.
- Communication, public consultation and other permissioning exercises will be planned.

Opportunities to co-develop and resource projects will be sought to improve efficiency.

#### **4.2.4 Implementation, Measuring and Reporting Period**

The implementation, measuring and reporting period will notionally commence in January of 2024, although for more urgent tasks, implementation will have already commenced. In summary during this period:

- Individual projects will be progressed according to their development plan to create the NRN
- Funding will be sought and resource plans implemented
- Development plan outcomes will be reported upon no less than annually
- Biodiversity change, where measured as part of the plan for individual projects, will be reported on annually
- Other social value outcomes, such as relating to wellbeing, education and climate change mitigation, where measured as part of the plan for individual projects, will be reported on annually
- City wide biodiversity change will be measured and reported upon on no less than on a 5-year basis.

