

**Executive**

**18 March 2021**

Report of the Director of Place and Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment.

Portfolio of the Executive Member for Environment & Climate Change

## **Pollinator Strategy**

### **Summary**

1. This report seeks approval of a Pollinator Strategy.

### **Recommendations**

2. The Executive is asked to approve the Strategy.

**Reason:** To improve suitable habitat within York for pollinators.

### **Background**

3. In July 2019 Council resolved “*to request a paper to Executive setting out the options for a comprehensive Pollinator Action Plan to include consideration of the management of appropriate verges, parks and other open spaces for wildflowers and biodiversity; other possible measures to support pollinators and the options for working collaboratively to develop and implement the plan with other local organisations.*”
4. A draft strategy was developed in late 2019 by the Council’s Ecologist and Countryside Officer with assistance from Public Realm. In August 2020 the Executive referred the draft on to the Climate Change Scrutiny Committee. Informal feedback on the draft strategy has been received and these comments are incorporated.
5. A copy of the draft is attached as Annex 1. It has two parts, part 1 provides context, examples of what can be achieved and links to best

practice and Part 2 sets out aims and objectives to implement the strategy.

## **The Strategy**

6. The Strategy proposes as its vision:

*Our (York) local environment will be rich in pollinator friendly habitats, helping support sustainable pollinator populations and making places more attractive for people to live and work in.*

7. To implement the strategy the council will

- a) Ensure the needs of pollinators are represented in local plans, policy and guidance;
- b) to protect, increase and enhance the amount of pollinator habitat on council owned or managed land, and help to improve the status of any locally threatened species;
- c) improve our knowledge and understanding of pollinators in our local area;
- d) increase awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs across local residents, businesses and other landowners, and;
- e) work together with partners to deliver these aims.

8. To deliver the strategy a series of Aims have been proposed, against which 'Actions' have been identified these are detailed in Part 2: The aims range from setting high level strategy direction through the Planning Process, to changes in purchasing policy, to working in partnership with others to develop cross city action. Some can be adopted now, others require additional resources and others are likely to be at odds with other land uses.

## **Examples of existing work to support the strategy**

9. In support of the strategy the council is pursuing a range of initiatives to support pollinators which are detailed in the following paragraphs. These initiatives can be incorporated into the strategy.

10. York Community Woodland. A proposed 154 acre site of new amenity green space in Knapton, just outside the York outer ring road, will consist of more than 50,000 trees and include a wildflower meadow. The Council has made £3m available through the Northern

Forest budget to deliver the project, which is being supported by the White Rose Forest. A wildflower meadow will be incorporated into the project and we will be working with the Wildflower Meadow Trust to deliver and maintain this.

11. Ward based wildflower verges. A wide verge near Wheldrake has been selected for a reseeded with a local wildflower seed mix and a new mowing regime. Historically this has had no involvement from the council and is cut by a local farmer. This year care of the verge will be carried out via an informal partnership involving the council, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and a local farmer. The results of which will be seen in early summer 2021.
12. Hull Road Ward are, through their ward budgets, funding the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to develop and maintain areas of wild flower verges in the Feld Lane area of the Ward for two years. Working with Public Realm, suitable locations, specification and process were all agreed. This can become a role model open to all wards and guidance on how to develop such sites will be issued by autumn 2021 to assist planning for 2022.
13. Rural verge management. The vast majority of rural highway verges are not cut by the council's contractor (cutting being limited to a continuous 1m swath either side of the A and B roads, selected cycle paths and sightlines and T-junctions on C roads). The contract for this service is due for renewal in 2021 so can incorporate any lessons learned from the test projects detailed below.
14. Highway weed spraying. As part of this year's herbicide treatment of highways (footpaths, kerb lines, back lanes, and snickets) trials of alternative methods of weed control will take place. Glyphosate is currently used, this will be compared with alternative chemical and manual methods. Independent assessment of the alternative methods has been arranged, with the results due in the autumn 2021.
15. As the strategy identifies projects that deliver the pollinator strategy may be at odds with other uses of the land e.g. active recreation, therefore an approach where Wards identify and develop projects with their ward teams is to be encouraged.

## Options

16. The Executive have the option to:

- a. Approve the Strategy as drafted.
- b. Suggest further amendments and additions to be developed by officers.

## **Council Plan**

17. This proposal supports and contributes to the following Council Plan priority - A greener and cleaner city.

## **Implications**

- **Financial.** Where the strategy requires a change in other policies there are no financial implications. Where it requires action on the ground this will have to be funded by Wards or 3<sup>rd</sup> parties otherwise the Public Realm budget and their limited resources will be stretched further. There is no capacity to lead or coordinate city wide projects.

## **Risk Management**

18. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, the risks associated with the projects are:

Reputational – failure to adopt and implement a strategy risks reputational damage.

## **Contact Details**

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### **Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

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Report  Date 25/2/21  
Approved

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** List information for all

None

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all All

**For further information please contact the authors of the report**

**Background Papers: None**

**Annexes –**

**Annex 1 – Draft Strategy**

**List of Abbreviations Used in this Report:**

(TCV) Trust for Conservation Volunteers