

KENT NATURE PARTNERSHIP BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY 2020-2045

Cabinet - 10 December 2020

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 9 December 2020

Key Decision: Yes

This reports support the Key Aim of the Council Plan with regard to the Environment.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer: Helen French, Ext. 7357;

Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

To recommend to Cabinet to endorse the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy.

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To endorse the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy.

Reason for recommendation: The Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity strategy supports the Government ambitions and aspirations set out in the 25 year Environment Plan, "A Green Future".

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy sets out the contribution the County of Kent, and the Kent Nature Partnership (KNP), can make to the Government's ambitions to leave the environment in a better state than we found it and the aspirations set out in its 25 year Environment Plan, "A Green Future".
- 2 The Strategy has been produced under the guidance of a Task and Finish Group, comprising the following members of the Kent Nature Partnership:
 - Environment Agency
 - University of Greenwich
 - Kent Wildlife Trust
 - Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust

- Kent County Council
 - Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre
 - LEADER
 - RSPB
 - Natural England
 - Local Authority Representatives
- 3 The Biodiversity Strategy was subject to public consultation June - September 2019 and the final version was published in February 2020.
- 4 Cabinet is asked to endorse the Biodiversity Strategy.

Summary of the Strategy (from the KNP website)

- 5 “The Kent Biodiversity Strategy aims to deliver, over a 25 year period, the maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats that are thriving with wildlife and plants and ensure that the county’s terrestrial, freshwater, intertidal and marine environments regain and retain good health.
- 6 The Strategy looks to protect and recover threatened species and enhance the wildlife habitats that Kent is particularly important for. It also aims to provide a natural environment that inspires citizen engagement and is well used and appreciated, so that the mental and physical health benefits of such a connection can be realised by the people of Kent.
- 7 This will be achieved through the delivery of the following goals in Kent for 2045:
- A rich and growing terrestrial biodiversity, underpinned by more resilient and coherent ecological networks and healthy, well-functioning ecosystems.
 - Clean, plentiful and biologically diverse freshwater and intertidal ecosystems underpinned by implementation of a catchment based approach.
 - A reverse in the loss of marine biodiversity and delivering clean, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas through good management.
 - The widest possible range of ages and backgrounds will be benefiting from the mental and physical health benefits of the natural environment; and we will have inspired the next generation to take on guardianship of the county’s biodiversity.
- 8 Action will be steered by a broad spectrum of ambitious objectives. The Strategy has identified 17 priority habitats and 13 priority species that Kent can play a significant part in [restoring]. It has also identified a handful of

species that can act as indicators of the health of our ecosystems. In addition, the Strategy looks to further work addressing overarching considerations affecting biodiversity recovery, including wilding, climate change, natural solutions, soil health and invasive species.

- 9 Whilst the Strategy has a 25-year timeframe, its delivery will be planned on a five-year basis with regular review to ensure it continues to respond to environmental pressures and national policy drivers. It is intended that the targets will be owned by all those that have the opportunity to drive the action needed to realise the Strategy's vision - the success of the Strategy will depend on the county's collective action.
- 10 At a time of ecological crisis, the Kent Biodiversity Strategy aims to help steer the collaborative work of conservationists, government, business and individuals to work in partnership so that the county's natural landscape can be restored and threatened species can be saved."

Implications for Sevenoaks District

- 11 We work with partners including the North West Kent Countryside Partnership, Kent Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and AONB Units to develop and deliver projects to support the ecological and biodiversity value of the District and Kent. It is expected that this joint working will continue.
- 12 The Sevenoaks Greensands HLF project is referenced in the strategy as an example of delivering improvements to a priority habitat.
- 13 The Council's local planning policies support the Biodiversity Strategy. Local Policy sets out local areas of importance for biodiversity that will be protected from any development which may cause a loss in biodiversity value, habitats and/or result in damage to the ecological network.
- 14 Future policies will also be drafted to fulfil the Government's aim for biodiversity net gain from new development in accordance with the Environment Bill.

Next Steps

- 15 The Kent Nature Partnership are drafting Local Authority specific summary documents and an implementation plan to aid local authorities to engage with the strategy aims and objectives.
- 16 We will continue to work with the Kent Nature Partnership to deliver biodiversity improvements and we will support appropriate projects that meet the targets and objectives of the strategy.
- 17 We will ensure the Biodiversity Strategy is considered and referenced in relevant SDC policies and projects including Development Plan Policies and the Net Zero 2030 work where relevant.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

None

Key Implications

Financial

There are no key financial implications to the council in endorsing this strategy.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Kent Biodiversity strategy supports the Government ambitions and aspirations set out in the 25 year Environment Plan, “A Green Future”.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

The Kent Biodiversity Strategy sets out the contribution the County of Kent, and the Kent Nature Partnership, can make to the Government’s ambitions to leave the environment in a better state than we found it and the aspirations set out in its 25 year Environment Plan, “A Green Future”.

Appendices

Appendix A - Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045 (February 2020)

Background Papers

The Government’s 25 year Environment Plan - A Green Future

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services