

GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 October 2020

BIODIVERSITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

Report of the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group

Strategic Aim:	Sustainable Growth		
Exempt Information	No		
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mrs L Stephenson, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure, Environment, Highways, Transportation and Road Safety.		
Contact Officer(s):	Jo Morley, Governance Officer	01572 758271	jomorley@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	All		

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Reviews the report of the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group and the draft Biodiversity strategy as appended to their report (Appendix A)
2. Recommends the findings of the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group report to Council for approval.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the report of the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group to the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee and to recommend their findings to Council for approval.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its first meeting of the Municipal Year on 13 June 2019 Members of the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee expressed their wish to be involved with the development of a new Environmental Policy for the Council. At a subsequent meeting on 12 September 2019 the Committee decided to initially focus on Biodiversity and recommended that a Task and Finish Group be established to inform the review and development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Rutland County Council. Council unanimously approved the formation of the Biodiversity Task and

Finish group at its meeting on 14 October 2019 in line with its adoption of a climate change action motion which, as part of its seventh commitment, requested that Scrutiny Committees consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing Council policies and strategies

- 2.2 The purpose of the group was to gain an understanding of biodiversity issues and explore best practice at other Councils and in other areas in order to identify ways in which biodiversity in Rutland may be improved. These findings would form the basis of recommendations which would inform the review and development of a Biodiversity Strategy for RCC.
- 2.3 The Biodiversity Task and Finish Group met on a regular basis and their findings and recommendations can be found in the attached report.
- 2.4 The draft strategy was initially sent to the Committee for review at their meeting on 13 February 2020. At this meeting it was resolved that the Group would present the final report detailing the work process and their final recommendations to the next meeting of the Committee but the cancellation of meetings due to the Covid pandemic has meant a delay in actioning this.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Group, in the course of their work, consulted with key stakeholders including Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, conservation officers, landowners and RCC officers working in Environmental and Planning Services.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Overall the proposed biodiversity strategy will have financial implications for RCC, although some elements will be more significant than others. These implications have been mitigated where possible by proposed use of existing resources, eg. established communication channels etc.
- 5.2 More detailed financial implications will be confirmed as part of devising the annual action plans, which are proposed to underpin this Strategy.

6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group were approved by Council on 14 October 2019.
- 6.2 Subject to approval by the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee this report will be sent to Council for endorsement.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed.

8 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers and comments on the contents of the Task and Finish Group's report and recommends it to Council in order that the draft Biodiversity Strategy can be endorsed and implemented.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 There are no additional background papers to this report.

10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix 1: Report of the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group

Appendix A: Draft Biodiversity Strategy

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.