

MOTION FOR A DECLARATION OF A BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY – May 2019

This Council notes with concern recent reports from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on global species and habitat loss, and also that Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (Greater Cambridgeshire) combined has one of the lowest percentages of land cover of priority habitats, natural green spaces and designated nature conservation sites in England, with only 5.5% of the land surface having statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations and only 6.5% being priority habitat.

We recognise the importance of a healthy and biodiverse environment that ensures our City's future prosperity and enforces the wellbeing of all who live, work and study here.

We therefore pledge to provide leadership and to ensure that we work with all organisational departments, partners and our communities to reverse the decline in biodiversity and deliver measurable biodiversity net gain within Cambridge and the wider region.

Further to this, Council:

- (1) Declares its recognition of the global biodiversity emergency and the local impact this could have on the communities and businesses we serve**
- (2) Pledges to act during the first year of Motion being accepted, to secure future measurable biodiversity net gain for Cambridge, building on past achievements**
- (3) Pledges to develop plans for further action in second year of Motion being accepted and beyond to secure further biodiversity net gain, based on a full assessment of the scientific evidence on how best to achieve this goal.**

In recognition of this biodiversity emergency, during first year of Motion being accepted Cambridge City Council will:

- Make the Council estate, more hospitable to a wide range of plants and animals, including on our parks and open spaces.
- Publish a Parks Biodiversity Toolkit to encourage community engagement with habitat creation such as flowering meadows for pollinating insects.
- Identify how the City's open spaces function as part of a Cambridgeshire coherent ecological network and prioritise areas for protection and enhancement.
- Set measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, seeking to increase community engagement with habitat creation such as bee banks and ponds.
- Work to improve the City Council Nature Conservation Strategy, building on the significant work already delivered since its adoption in 2006, by embedding measurable biodiversity net gain across the authority.
- Work in partnership with institutions, schools, businesses and community groups, to raise awareness and encourage wider biodiversity action across the City by:
 - Providing a range of public engagement and awareness campaigns to provide advice to residents and businesses on how to protect and enhance habitats within their neighbourhoods.

- Promoting the adoption of the Local Nature Partnership ‘Developing with Nature Toolkit’ within all new major developments to ensure biodiversity best practice is implemented and recognised
- Continuing to safeguard and enhance the trees of our urban forest to maximise their biodiversity benefits through the implementation of the adopted Tree Strategy (2016)
- Encouraging and supporting urban agriculture as set out in the City Council Sustainable Food Policy, which is required to secure a silver award as a Sustainable Food City
- Continuing to support the Local Wildlife Trust through a service level agreement (SLA) to ensure our designated Local Wildlife Sites reach and retain favourable conservation status
- Continuing to support the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre through a SLA to ensure validated, up-to-date biodiversity data is captured and available to decision makers when considering the implications of development, land management and projects.
- Continuing to support Natural Cambridgeshire, the Local Nature Partnership (LNP), to deliver the shared vision for ‘Cambridgeshire to be an exemplar for the landscape scale restoration of the natural environment’.

We further aspire to:

- Ensure the delivery of biodiversity enhancements through our planning policy and development control functions by providing **guidance** to support existing biodiversity policies as part of the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and forthcoming Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD. Development of the Joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan will enable the development of a mandatory biodiversity net gain policy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, ensuring that this is a core principle for all future development across the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
- Establish a Cambridge Biodiversity Charter, calling on all organisations, businesses and individuals in the city to each establish their own Biodiversity Action Plans and to commit to enhancing their open spaces, to contribute towards a city’s wide net gain
- Design new council housing for net gain of biodiversity and opportunities in the form of integral swift boxes, biodiverse green roofs and hedgehog highways etc, [where viable].
- Work with the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to promote sustainable transport by the implementation of biodiversity net gain targets
- Establish a Biodiversity recognition scheme for schools / community groups / business and individual gardens.

Supporting Information:

Climate change, biodiversity and human health

<https://www.who.int/globalchange/ecosystems/biodiversity/en/>

WWF Living Planet report 2018

https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/wwfintl_livingplanet_full.pdf

Biodiversity: state of emergency <https://news.cnrs.fr/articles/biodiversity-state-of-emergency>

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/nature-conservation-strategy>

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/tree-strategy>

Natural Cambridgeshire Vision <https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/vision/>

<https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/nc-developing-with-nature-toolkit.pdf>