

Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Update : 16th January 2025



Context

- ❑ Ecological Emergency; Declared April 2022.
- ❑ Ecological Emergency Action Plan (EEAP); to respond to the issue – applies to council land and practices.
- ❑ Monitor & review the management of council land assets through intro activities to promote and achieve best ecological practice.
- ❑ Plan contents; areas for action, service leads, resource implications and associated targets as possible.

Key Considerations

- ❑ Link to LNRS; a strategic approach for nature-based environmental action and investment across the county.
- ❑ EEAP; no dedicated internal resource . Focussed on actions & doing things within current resources, or external commitments where possible.
- ❑ 26 action areas /outputs under 4 themes: 'Land Management', 'Education, Awareness and Communication', 'Policies and Strategies'.

Land Management

- ❑ Habitat surveys and assessments for designation of Local Wildlife Sites for Countryside-managed sites underway; 11 of 24 sites completed. Assessing against new LWS criteria for approval by North East LWS partnership when met.
- ❑ Trials for diversifying grasslands through naturalistic management of 45 meadow areas, now being maintained and will be recorded into BNG and LNRS documents.
- ❑ Non-herbicide trials for weed control over selected sites; no issues raised so regime to be widely rolled-out across the county.
- ❑ Consolidation of council woodland and forestry estate into single management structure for all tree planting and maintenance matters; meets legacy needs from Woodland Revival programme closedown.

Education, Awareness and Communication

- ❑ Partnership based delivery over landscape-scale projects e.g. National Trust, delivery of Seascapes, key contributions to Brightwater partnership (River Skerne).
- ❑ Agreement of ecological implications in all decision-making reports in process of corporate review by Democratic Services.
- ❑ Baseline surveys and assessments carried out to enable nutrient neutrality mitigation measures on council and developer's land completed and similar modelling for managing delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on DCC sites underway.

Education, Awareness and Communication

- ❑ Eco-emergency priorities aligned to & embedded into CERP3, including website.
- ❑ Engagement with 47 schools on biodiversity issues with findings feeding into LNRS consultation. Promoting delivery of DfE biodiversity improvement grants for 40 schools.
- ❑ Delivering nat. environment activities across Parks & Countryside estate including volunteering days, health/ leisure walks young people projects. Continuation of X3 temp. engagement co-ordinator posts - funded to April '26.

Policies and Strategies

- ❑ Fully embedded ecological impacts into procurement alongside social impact scoring for all procurement contracts (Themes Opportunities and Measures).
- ❑ Ongoing prep of LNRS through wide consultation and engagement with landowners and wider stakeholders. Opportunity Mapping completed, Measures in response to this being finalised ahead of final consultation round.
- ❑ Completion of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for guiding developers in making biodiversity contributions. Similar formula for sale of use of DCC land in sale of biodiversity credits being progressed.

Policies and Strategies

- ❑ Cont. development of corporate officer working group to consider all opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity alongside other strategic options.
- ❑ Strategy under development for naturalistic land management regimes on amenity grasslands.
- ❑ Corporate Environmental Statement reviewed and revised to include responding to Ecological Emergency declaration as a corporate priority.

Overview

- ❑ Good progress to date despite no dedicated resource.
- ❑ 14 areas of action being progressed across services
- ❑ Continually evolving as more programmes come on stream
- ❑ Key driver for continued development = emerging role as DC response and reporting mech. for Biodiversity Duty under the Environment Act & opportunities for link-up and feeding into LNRS
- ❑ Further updates to follow.

Points for Discussion?