



Biodiversity Policy

1 BACKGROUND

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 the Council must have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of its policy and decision making. It is required to agree policies and objectives for actions to take for biodiversity (which can include restoring or enhancing a population or habitat).

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to the all property owned, managed or influenced by the Council. It will be reviewed and updated when appropriate.

3 AIMS

3.1 This policy sets out how biodiversity considerations should affect the Council management of its property, including green and blue spaces and any associated procurement. The property includes:

- Woodlands, gardens, parks and public open space
- Community amenities including sports grounds and cemeteries
- Waterbodies, including Nettleham Beck
- Buildings and associated landscaping

3.2 For all decisions affecting any of the properties, the following questions should be addressed:

- How can we avoid harm/detriment to biodiversity?
- How can we minimize harm, if unavoidable?
- Where there is harm, how may this be restored and enhanced?
- Are there any opportunities to develop or add to biodiversity, for example, wildflower meadows, tree planting, bird/bat boxes, diverse habitat?

4 MANAGEMENT PLANS

4.1 Each of the following properties (at least) is to have a management plan that is used to guide all work there:

- Vicar's Wood
- Green Lane
- Bishops Palace and Meadow
- Mulsanne Park
- The Old Quarry
- Bill Bailey's Park
- Riverdale
- Nettleham Beck
- The burial ground and Swathe

4.2 These plans should:

- Describe the biodiversity baseline and potential for enhancement, guided where possible by ecological surveys
- Set out necessary maintenance tasks to ensure public safety, access etc (using the guidance in 3.2)
- Set out a timeframe with actions to increase biodiversity, by creating, maintaining and enhancing habitat.
- Monitor success of enhancements and update plans annually.

5 PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

- 5.1 Pesticides and herbicides damage biodiversity, often destroying a wider range of wildlife than the target species.
- 5.2 Minimise the impact on habitats and biodiversity from grounds maintenance and landscaping work and prevent pollution by trying to avoid pesticide and herbicide use.
- 5.3 Applicable to contractors in addition to employees.

6 PEST CONTROL

Where there is a perceived need to control species (external to buildings) this should be justified and where agreed to be necessary, humane methods and prevention should be preferred.

7 CREATE, MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE HABITAT - GENERAL

- 7.1 Seek to create, maintain and enhance habitats to encourage both plants and animals, where possible.
- 7.2 Minimise the impact on biodiversity from development works and, where possible, install nature-based solutions and seek a net increase in ecological value through project design and delivery.
- 7.3 Ensure ecological surveys are completed prior to, and post completion of change of use, building work etc. Results to be documented.
- 7.4 Work with stakeholders, e.g. riparian owners, WLDC, LCC to improve habitat and biodiversity management practices.
- 7.5 Seek opportunities to cultivate an awareness of and connection with nature within our community through the management of our estate, for example appropriate signage explaining rationale for 'No Mow May'.
- 7.6 Via ecological surveys, identify the risks of alien species on parish property and remove if necessary
- 7.7 Encourage choice of landscapes to minimise water run off
- 7.8 Review and increase over time the grassed areas that can be left unmown/follow a reduced mowing regime.
- 7.9 On identified areas, only one mowing a year where possible and try to avoid mowing an entire site at once (good for hibernating insects and ground nesting birds) - aim to mow in August / September after seeding.
- 7.10 No artificial fertilisers other than on playing fields
- 7.11 Planting more trees and hedges on suitable sites.

8 TRAINING

Provide training for staff and councillors to ensure they understand this Policy and the need to follow the management plans

9 PROCUREMENT

This policy applies to procurement and contractors. For example, in choosing suppliers and products, favour those that have least impact on biodiversity, in terms of source of natural resources and lifecycle of products.