

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO	
	Discretionary/	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
Lead Member: Councillor Paul Kunes E-mail: cllr.paul.kunes@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Cabinet Members consulted: None		
			Other Members consulted: Environment and Community Panel and Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group		
Lead Officer: Stuart Ashworth E-mail: stuart.ashworth@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Officers consulted:		
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES/NO

Date of meeting: 17th January 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL'S URBAN WILDLIFE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP

Summary

At its meeting on 9th June 2021 the Environment and Community Panel established an Informal Working Group to look at Urban Wildlife. This report presents the recommendations from the Group, which have been supported by the Environment and Community Panel, for the Cabinet to consider.

Recommendation

1. That the recommendations from the Environment and Community Panel, as set out in the report, are passed to the Cabinet Biodiversity Task Group for consideration.
2. That the Environment and Community Panel be kept updated on progress with the recommendations as appropriate.

Reason for Decision

To promote urban wildlife in the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 9th June 2021 the Environment and Community Panel established an Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group.
- 1.2 The Informal Working Group held four meetings and the notes from the meeting are available for Members to view on the Mod Gov Intranet system. This included a meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Environment to discuss their proposed recommendations to the Environment and Community Panel.

1.3 The Informal Working Group presented their recommendations to the Environment and Community Panel at their meeting on 5th October 2022.

2.0 Recommendations from the Environment and Community Panel.

2.1 The Environment and Community Panel supported the recommendations from the Informal Working Group, as set out below, and recommended that they be presented to Cabinet for consideration. Additional commentary on the recommendations is also set out below.

1. Encourage the use of bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog highways in new and existing Borough Council properties.

To investigate the possibility of adopting a policy of giving the option of installing swift and bat boxes, bee bricks and hedgehog highways in new developments. The Group acknowledge that it would be difficult to insist that this was included in new developments, but feel that people should be given the option of having them provided. The Group also encourage installation of items to promote Urban Wildlife in existing Council facilities where appropriate.

2. The Council to investigate providing wildflower seeds for redundant allotments and community orchards/gardens and encourage the planting of wildlife seeds in the community.

The Group would like the Council to give consideration to planting wildflower seeds in redundant areas such as unused allotments and community areas. They ask that the Council use pollinators and flowers that benefit wildlife where possible. Parishes could also be encouraged to plant redundant areas.

3. The Council to encourage bird feeding stations and nest boxes in schools.

This could involve the Men's Shed who have indicated that they would be interested in assisting with the provision of nest boxes for schools.

4. Support of a 'Nest Box Trail' in King's Lynn.

This is an initiative by Julian Moulton and his idea is to locate a variety of nest boxes throughout King's Lynn with a map and guide. Boxes could be located at playgrounds, public spaces and various buildings. This could be publicised by having a stand at town centre events.

5. Produce literature advising how residents can help support their urban wildlife and promoting the nest box trail in King's Lynn.

This could include links to local organisations who are interested in promoting Urban Wildlife along with links to useful websites, details of the best types of plants to encourage urban wildlife and helpful hints and tips to support urban wildlife in their own gardens.

6. Engage with local groups to participate in urban wildlife.

Organisations such as Men's Shed, In Bloom and schools could be engaged to promote urban wildlife. Stands at events could promote the nest box trail and provide literature as mentioned in recommendation 5 above.

Linking with recommendation 3 above, schools could be encouraged to become involved by promoting what they have done for urban wildlife, with the possibility of a competition.

The Informal Working Group have also been approached by NVN (Nature Volunteer Network) who have offered to collect wild bird seed for bee highways in the Borough. They are careful only to collect 10-20% of the seed on any given wild plant. This is an example of a local organisation who wants to contribute and also a demonstration of the cooperation the Borough can encourage and develop between outside bodies interested in local wildlife.

7. Encourage Councillors to promote Urban Wildlife in their Wards and Parishes where appropriate.

This could include promoting the benefits of Urban Wildlife and signposting to relevant organisations. Councillors could suggest ideas to their Parishes such as bulk buying wild bird seed, which would bring the cost down to residents, and then could be sold at cost by Parish Councils. Councillors could also provide detail of good work in their Wards which could be circulated to other Councillors via the Members Bulletin and then cascaded down to Parish Councils as appropriate.

3 Options considered

- 3.1 The urban wildlife working group has made recommendations which have been supported by the Environment & Community panel. The options will be for this to be supported by Cabinet and taken forward in an appropriate way, or not supported.
- 3.2 Given the fact the Biodiversity Task group has already been agreed, and there is a general drive to improve biodiversity, it is considered that the only feasible option is that this should be supported by Cabinet and taken forward. In addition, the new Biodiversity Task Group would be the ideal forum to discuss these recommendations from Environment and Community Panel.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications at this stage, as the proposal is that the recommendations from the Environment & Community Panel, relating to their working group, will be considered in more detail by the Cabinet Biodiversity Task Group.

5.0 Personnel Implications

- 5.1 There are none.

6.0 Environmental Considerations

- 6.1 These are positive, as the aim is to improve and help urban wildlife in the borough.

7.0 Statutory Considerations

- 7.1 None

8.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 As recommendations to be considered by another task group, not applicable at this stage.

9.0 Risk management Implications

9.1 None

10.0 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations Granted

10.1 None

11.0 Background Papers

Agendas and minutes from the Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group available on the Intranet.

Report and minutes from the Environment and Community Panel meeting held on 5th October 2021.