

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

BIO DIVERSITY TASK GROUP

Minutes from the Meeting of the Bio Diversity Task Group held on Tuesday, 27th August, 2024 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor M de Whalley (Chair)
Councillors A Bullen, D Heneghan and P Kunes

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies of absence.

2 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

3 **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

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RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th May 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

5 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

6 **FIRST DRAFT OF REPORT TO CABINET**

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The Assistant Director, Environment and Planning presented the report and advised the Task Group this was the first draft of the report.

The Assistant Director outlined the options in the report and emphasised the policies and objectives were at the early stages. He advised the group this report and recommendations outlined in the report would be presented to Environment and Community Panel then to Cabinet. He referred to the report which included topics from the

Task Group meetings since being established. The Assistant Director brought to the Task Group's attention the gap in Officer resources and therefore the need for the biodiversity job role.

The Operations Manager highlighted that the report included realistic expectations of what can be done. He endorsed the requirement, and the Biodiversity Project Officer job role would be key in achieving what was set out in the report.

The Chair, Councillor de Whalley thanked the Officers for the report.

Councillor Heneghan asked if Members would be able to have an input on the Biodiversity Project Officer job role's area of work as she felt a high priority of the job role should be urban areas.

The Assistant Director confirmed the job specification was to be written by Officers in the usual way and was to have an educational and communicational part of the role. He added the job role would include a wide range of duties.

The Chair, Councillor de Whalley referred to the report and highlighted the information which was included around urban areas and confirmed this was to be a focus of the Biodiversity Project Officer job role.

Councillor Kunes reiterated his concerns from the previous meeting, in relation to the funding for the Biodiversity Project Officer role from the Climate Change budget. He added that Climate Change and Biodiversity were different, and additional funding from elsewhere needed to be provided.

Councillor Bullen, in response to Councillor Kunes comments encouraged the stance on West Norfolk being greener and engaging with communities to promote West Norfolk. He added he felt both Climate Change and Biodiversity were both part of the bigger picture.

The Chair, Councillor de Whalley advised the Biodiversity Project Officer job role was originally 2-year fixed contract and funded by the Climate Change budget as a stop gap mission with the hope the Biodiversity Project Officer job role becomes permanent.

The Council's Senior Ecologist explained the gap in Officer resource which the Open Spaces Team and herself did not cover. She added there was no capacity for them to fulfil and therefore the need for the Biodiversity Project Officer role. The Senior Ecologist added there was a need for a change in culture surrounding Biodiversity.

The Chair, Councillor de Whalley sought clarification on the Urban Wildlife referred to in the first recommendation as set out in paragraph 2.3.

The Assistant Director referred to the report, paragraph 2.3, recommendation 8 which was that Cabinet be requested to provide a budget to deliver the proposals. He confirmed he would amend the report to ensure this was clear before being presented to Cabinet.

The Chair, Councillor de Whalley referred to page 13, paragraph 2.5 of the report which referred to the reconsideration of the policies and actions within 5 years of completion. He sought clarification of how this would happen.

The Assistant Director confirmed that this needed to be done within 5 years and clarified it would likely be done by the Environment and Community Panel and not the Task Group which was going to a conclusion.

Councillor Bullen brought to the Task Group attention, page 12 of the agenda, paragraph 2.3, recommendation 2 was to be wildflower seeds rather than wildlife seeds.

Councillor Kunes asked for it to be noted that he agreed with the recommendations except the specific funding element associated with recommendation 2 as the Biodiversity Project Officer role was to be funded from the Climate Change budget.

AGREED:

1. To accept the recommendations of the Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group as set out in paragraph 2.3, save for recommendation 8, which is covered below with the creation of the fixed-term biodiversity project officer role.
2. To agree to the appointment of a Biodiversity Project Officer role, for a fixed period of two years, with funding coming from the climate change budget.
3. That the Council adopts the biodiversity policies and specific objectives set out in appendix 1.
4. To agree the creation of a Pollinator Action Plan, based on the draft attached (appendix 2), with the final wording to be agreed with the Assistant Directors for Environment and Planning and Operations and Commercial, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity.
5. That the community biodiversity competition initiative, detailed in the report, is supported by the Council.

The meeting closed at 2.24 pm