

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	5 th October 2021		
TITLE:	Report from the Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group		
TYPE OF REPORT:	IWG Report		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Environment		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Rebecca Parker, Democratic Services Officer		
OPEN/EXEMPT	OPEN	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes – if the Panel decide to make recommendations to Cabinet

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
At its meeting on 9 th June 2021 the Environment and Community Panel established an Informal Working Group to look at Urban Wildlife. This report presents the findings from the Group for the Panel to consider and make recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.
KEY ISSUES:
The purpose of the Group was to look at how the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk could encourage and support urban wildlife for the benefits of residents and wildlife.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
The Environment and Community Panel can decide whether or not to forward on the recommendations from the Informal Working Group to Cabinet for consideration.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>The Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group recommend the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage the use of bird boxes, bat boxes, bee highways and hedgehog highways in new and existing Borough Council properties. 2. The Council to investigate providing wildflower seeds for redundant allotments and community orchards/gardens. 3. The Council to encourage bird feeding stations and nest boxes in schools. 4. Support of a 'Nest Box Trail' in King's Lynn. 5. Produce literature advising how residents can help support their urban wildlife and promoting the nest box trail in King's Lynn. 6. Engage with local groups to participate in urban wildlife and the creation of bee highways. 7. Encourage Councillors to promote Urban Wildlife in their Wards and Parishes
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
To promote urban wildlife in the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 9th June 2021, following a presentation from Councillor Bullen, the Environment and Community Panel established an Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group.

2. Membership

Members of the Group are Councillors Bullen (Chair), Bower, Hipperson, Kirk and Squire.

3. Meetings

The Informal Working Group held meetings on 30th June, 13th July, 28th July and 27th August 2021.

At their meeting on 27th August the Informal Working Group held a discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Environment to discuss their proposed recommendations to the Environment and Community Panel.

The Informal Working Group also presented an interim update to the Environment and Community Panel at its meeting on 31st August 2021.

4. Summary of discussions.

Items discussed at the Informal Working Group are available for Members to view on Mod Gov. Details are provided below on the discussions on the recommendations.

5. Further work of the Informal Working Group

Although the Informal Working Group have concluded their work, they ask that the Environment and Community Panel give consideration to keeping the Group established.

The Informal Working Group would like to continue to work with the Cabinet to implement any recommendations taken forward.

5. Recommendations

The Informal Working Group ask that the Environment and Community Panel recommend the following to Cabinet.

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.

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.