

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, 14th May, 2024 at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor M de Whalley (Chair), Councillors P Kunes and Councillor Parish (Substitute for Councillor Bullen)

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Stuart Ashworth- Assistant Director- Environment and Planning
Claire Wiggs- Ecologist
Martin Chisholm- Assistant Director- Operations & Commercial
Claire Thompsett- Operations Manager
Chris Durham- Operations Manager
Matthew Henry- Assistant Director- Property and Projects

1 **MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

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RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting on 15th April 2024 were agreed as a correct record

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bartrum, Bullen and Dark.

3 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Devulapalli was present under Standing Order 34.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business under Standing Order 7.

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EXISTING BIODIVERSITY ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT, AND PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE BCKLWN.

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The Operations Managers and Assistant Director for Environment and Planning provided the Task Group with a presentation.

The presentation highlighted the biodiversity areas within the Borough along with planting facts and biodiversity projects funded by planning.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the presentation and invited questions and comments, a summary of which is set out below.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Devulapalli sought clarification on Recreation Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).

The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning explained, it was the impact of certain types of development on European Protected sites such as Roydon Common, Dersingham Bog and The Wash as the additional visitors caused by population growth created issues for these sensitive areas, which has to be mitigated, for example educating dog walkers.

Councillor Devulapalli asked further if this included any King's Lynn Areas such as Gaywood.

The Assistant Director confirmed this area contributed to the RAMS find, as did all residential development coming forward.

Councillor Devulapalli referred to the land adjacent to Florence Fields and that this area was protected.

The Operations Manager confirmed this was still with Corporate Projects and there had been discussions about the management of the area.

Councillor Parish commented that the Wildlife Trust were looking to obtain the management of the area.

In response to a question from Councillor Devulapalli, the Assistant Director confirmed he would provide an answer by email to update Councillor Devulapalli.

However, the Chair asked for a report on the area adjacent to Florence Fields to be added to for the agenda for Biodiversity Task Group in June.

Councillor Parish made further comment that fencing being put up was being considered to stop dogs and protect wildlife and birds nesting

which was then removed in the autumn. He added, the RSPB Officers were employed to look after the area, and it would be good for funding to be extended.

The Chair summarised the information given by the Officers and highlighted key points.

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OPTIONS ON BOROUGH COUNCIL LAND AND BUILDINGS GOING FORWARD

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The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning presented the report.

The Assistant Director for Property and Projects was invited to comment further.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Directors for the report and invited comments and questions from the Task Group.

Councillor Kunes referred to paragraph 5.3 of the report and stated his concerns 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 it should be funded from elsewhere.

The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning thanked Councillor Kunes for his comments and understood the point regarding funding the role but it was a question of difficult choices.

The Chair added Climate Change and Biodiversity were interlinked.

Councillor Parish asked where the tree planting was funded from and felt it was similar to funding the biodiversity role.

The Chair responded it was from the Climate Change budget.

Councillor Kunes added that planting trees reduced CO2 in the atmosphere which he felt was a key difference.

Councillor Kunes asked for it to be recorded that he did not agree with the first recommendation, "that consideration be given to the appointment of Biodiversity Project Officer role, for a fixed period of 2 years to carry out the duties set out in the report", because of the funding coming from the climate change budget.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Devulapalli commented she supported the recommendations.

The Chair and Councillor Parish supported the recommendations to cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Biodiversity Task Group makes the following recommendations to cabinet:

- 1) That consideration be given to the appointment of Biodiversity Project Officer role, for a fixed period of 2 years to carry out the duties set out in the report.
- 2) That biodiversity policies and specific objectives are agreed to show how the council is meeting the biodiversity duty.
- 3) That a Pollinator Action Plan be produced.

The meeting closed at 4.49 pm