

**Norwich City Council**

**Biodiversity Development Plan**

**2022 – 2025**

**Structure, Process and Programme**

**Draft for Internal Consultation**

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## **1. The Requirement for a Biodiversity Development Plan**

The Biodiversity Strategy 2022 - 2032 (hereafter 'the Strategy') calls for the development and implementation of a Biodiversity Action Plan (hereafter the 'BAP'). Feedback from the Strategy's public consultation exercise, undertaken during August of 2022, confirmed the most suitable name for the plan as the Biodiversity Development Plan (hereafter the 'BDP'). The BDP is the principal means of delivering the objectives of the Strategy. This document sets out the structure and processes which guide the establishment and evolution of the BDP, as well as the programme in the form of a Gantt chart.

## **2. The Requirement for a Biodiversity Working Group**

The Strategy also sets out the requirement for a cross directorate Biodiversity Working Group (hereafter the 'Working Group') comprising officers of the Council. The purpose of the Working Group is to develop and implement the BDP, ensure coordination with internal and external stakeholders and provide assurances around the delivery of strategic objectives. With regards decision making, the Working Group's remit is to make recommendations, for CLT's consideration and decision.

Following the public consultation period for the Strategy and BDP, which closed at the end of August 2022, the Environmental Strategy Team initiated its role to act as secretariat to the Working Group, with responsibility for delivering the following tasks:

- Convene a Biodiversity Work Group
- Produce and agree the Terms of Reference
- Establish a compliance register
- Establish an associated strategies & plans register
- Establish a biodiversity aspects<sup>1</sup> register
- Develop funding opportunities register
- Develop a risks and opportunities register
- Develop a budgets baseline & funding strategy
- Develop a reporting KPI dashboard
- Arrange and deliver training to officers
- Recruit a full-time biodiversity officer

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<sup>1</sup> A register of the ways in which the council impacts biodiversity both positively and negatively

The Working Group was convened in September 2022 and has met to further the detailed development of the Development Plan. Its members currently include representation from the following teams:

- Environmental Strategy Team
- Finance
- Planning and Regulatory Services
- Environment Services
- Norwich City Services Ltd
- Citywide Services
- Fringe Project
- Housing and Community Safety
- Property and Economic Development
- Communications

### **3. BDP Funding**

With regards Council operations and nature assets owned by the Council, the BDP will be funded using existing and agreed budgets and new funds from internal spend to save schemes, external sources including grants from government, charitable bodies, Community Infrastructure Levy, and the private sector. The Council shall manage financial decisions associated with Norwich City Council's NRN in line with our Corporate Plan priorities and internal planning processes.

With regards to tasks relating to council operations, the development of the BDP is premised on the general principle that intelligently managing green spaces *less* intensively brings about improvements in biodiversity, as well as reducing the cost of grounds maintenance. Therefore, it is the Working Group's responsibility to manage existing budgets in such a way to create net savings, where this is a corporate priority, whilst at the same time improving biodiversity.

Three important roles for the Working Group exist with regards funding and budget management:

1. Ensure existing budgets are analysed and intelligently coordinated and applied to deliver the aims of the Strategy, as well as delivering existing priorities and commitments, relating to each specific service area.
2. Develop a strategy to leverage, coordinate and apply external funds

3. Ensure that income from offsite Biodiversity Net Gain agreements is effectively used to deliver long-term improvements in biodiversity.

With regards the funding of nature assets owned and/or developed by others e.g. strategic partners and VCSE groups, obtaining funding is the responsibility of the organisation concerned.

## **4. BDP Format**

The BDP programme is formatted and presented in the form of a Gantt chart, which is appended to this document. This visual format allows individual tasks and their timelines to be easily identified. A version of the programme, in the form of a table, is included in the appendix of this document.

## **5. BDP Structure**

The BDP is structured by means of thematic workstreams and sub-tasks plotted against a calendar with 3-month granularity. The BDP presented is an initial iteration, i.e., a starting point, and will be developed over time to deliver the objectives of the Strategy by responding to contextual needs, conditions, opportunities and legislation.

### **5.1 BDP Thematic Workstreams**

The BDP is structured according to the following overarching workstreams:

- Working Group administration and reporting
- Funding and budget management
- Land use planning
- Council operations
- Species & nature recovery strategies
- Biodiversity measurement
- Engagement with Interested Parties including residents
- Promotion of education opportunities
- Engagement with Strategic Partners

Each workstream encompasses numerous sub-tasks which contribute to the delivery of the strategic objectives. Interdependencies between the subtasks are recognised including with external workstreams and actors.

## 5.2 BDP Timescales

The initial iteration of the BDP is set out according to a 3-year ahead timeframe, with the 3-year ahead 'rolling' horizon maintained, by the working group, as the plan moves forward. The timescales are based on calendar years or parts thereof.

Each subtask has a proposed timeline which enables coordination and management of interdependences between stakeholders. The timeline for individual tasks is subject to change depending on constraints, opportunities and interdependencies. Some subtasks will be ongoing, i.e. the timeline set out in the plan denotes the *initiation* of the task to the point where it becomes effective, but the task will continue over time.

The plan is organised, in broad terms, into four stages:

1. A communication and engagement stage, where existing and potential new nature assets are identified for the development of the NRN, as well as VSCE management and labour resources;
2. A mapping and coordination stage where existing and potential new nature assets are mapped/prioritised into a cohesive NRN to ensure sufficient coverage to meet the objectives of the Strategy;
3. A programme development stage where action and funding plans are developed for new nature assets, and
4. An implementation period where new and existing nature assets are created, connected, and enhanced.

A summary of the tasks which fall into each period is set out in the sections below.

### 5.2.1 Communication and Engagement Stage

The engagement period is scheduled between November 2022 to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2023. During this period:

- Internal and external stakeholders will be engaged with to initiate the NRN mapping exercise, including, where timescales allow, integration with GNLP<sup>2</sup> & GNGIS<sup>3</sup>, River Wensum Strategy and the national NRN for which Norfolk County Council are nominated lead; although integration can occur at any time.
- A 'Big Biodiversity Workshop' public event for VCSEs, biodiversity champions, citizen scientists and residents will be held to bring together interested parties to generate a schedule of nature assets.

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<sup>2</sup> Greater Norwich Local Plan

<sup>3</sup> Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Study

- Strategic Partners will be engaged with to map existing and potential new nature assets.
- Local nature recovery strategies/opportunities for individual habitats and species will be identified, provided by Norfolk County Council, strategic partners and interested parties.
- Council stakeholders, by means of the Working Group, will identify existing and potential new nature assets.
- A schedule of VSCE management and labour resources will be produced

### 5.2.2 Mapping and Coordination Stage

The mapping and coordination stage falls within quarter 2 and 3 of 2023. The aim of this stage is to take the potential new and existing nature resources identified in the previous stage, and spatially map them into a cohesive NRN. The output of this stage includes:

- A map of existing and new nature *cores* i.e. significant habitats, where biodiversity can thrive, these include initiatives to rewild existing parkland.
- Determination of nature corridors along which biodiversity can thrive, travel and penetrate the higher density areas of the city.
- Determination of significant and smaller informal green spaces and blue assets around buildings, to produce network *stepping stones*.
- Inclusion of the Local Nature Recovery Strategies/opportunities produced/identified by Norfolk County Council, strategic partners and interested parties.
- Cross partner knowledge sharing to optimise biodiversity

The exercise will highlight gaps in the NRN where additional cores, corridors and stepping stones need to be strategically created through further engagement and opportunity generation within the relevant location. The ultimate output of this stage is a map of the NRN showing existing nature assets and a schedule of nature asset development opportunities.

### 5.2.3 Programme Development Stage

This stage is scheduled for quarters 3 and 4 of 2023 but will extend into 2024 for larger projects. The schedule of nature asset development opportunities produced in the previous stage will be progressed as follows:

- An action, funding and resource plan (using the resources identified at the engagement stage) will be produced for each development opportunity by the opportunity owner e.g. community group, business, council or resident.
- Communication, public consultation and other permissioning exercises will be planned.

Opportunities to co-develop and resource projects will be sought to improve efficiency.

#### **5.2.4 Implementation, Measuring and Reporting Period**

The implementation, measuring and reporting period will notionally commence in January of 2024, although for more urgent tasks, implementation will have already commenced. In summary during this period:

- Individual projects will be progressed according to their development plan to create the NRN
- Funding will be sought and resource plans implemented
- Development plan outcomes will be reported upon no less than annually
- Biodiversity change, where measured as part of the plan for individual projects, will be reported on annually
- Other social value outcomes, such as relating to wellbeing, education and climate change mitigation, where measured as part of the plan for individual projects, will be reported on annually
- City wide biodiversity change will be measured and reported upon on no less than on a 5-year basis.



## 6. Appendix

Biodiversity Development Programme Table  
(Quarters refer to calendar year).

Development Plan Tasks	Managed by	Work Undertaken
<b>Working Group Administration and Reporting</b>		
Convene a Biodiversity Work Group	Environmental Strategy Manager	Q3 2022
Produce and agree the Terms of Reference	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Establish a compliance register	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Establish an associated strategies & plans register	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Establish a biodiversity aspects register	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Develop a funding opportunities register	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Develop a risks and opportunities register	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Develop a budgets baseline & funding strategy	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Arrange and deliver training to officers	Biodiversity Officer	Q1 2023
Recruit a full time biodiversity officer	Biodiversity Officer	Q2 2023
<b>Engagement with Strategic Partners to Develop NRN</b>		
Develop a communications and engagement plan	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022, Q1 2023
Engage with strategic partners	Biodiversity Officer	Q1 2023, Q2 2023
Develop knowledge and practice sharing	Biodiversity Officer	Q1 2023, Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of existing and potentially new nature assets	Strategic Partners	Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of nature recovery strategies and opportunities	Biodiversity Officer	Q2 2023
<b>Engagement with Interested Parties, VSCEs &amp; Residents to develop NRN</b>		
Develop a communications and engagement plan	Biod/Comm Officers	Q4 2022, Q1 2023
Engage citizen scientists, biod' champions and green groups	Biodiversity Officer	Q2 2023
Develop a VCSE resources register	Biod/Comm Officers	Q2 2023
Hold Big Biodiversity Workshop event	Biod/Comm Officers	Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of existing and potential new nature assets	VSCE's and Residents	Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of nature recovery strategies and opportunities	Biodiversity Officer	Q2 2023
<b>Align Council Operations to Develop NRN</b>		
<i>Housing</i>		
Develop an opportunities register for housing	Housing & Communities	Q1 2023, Q2 2023
Align housing facilities management with Strategy	Housing & Communities	Q2 2023, Q3 2023
Establish biodiversity principles for new social housing	Housing & Communities	Q2 2023, Q3 2023
Align council tenancy agreement to Strategy	Housing & Communities	Q2 2023, Q3 2023
Develop a schedule of existing and potential new nature assets	Housing & Communities	Q2 2023
<i>General buildings/property</i>		
Develop an opportunities register for general buildings/development	Property & Economic Dev'	Q1 2023, Q2 2023

Align general facilities management with Strategy	Property & Economic Dev'	Q1 2023, Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of existing and potential new nature assets	Property & Economic Dev'	Q2 2023
<i>Parks and open spaces</i>		
Develop management plans for Fringe sites	Norwich Fringe Project	Complete
Align management plans for LNR's & county wildlife sites with Strategy	Norwich Fringe Project	Q4 2022, Q1 2023
Develop an opportunities register for Parks and Open Spaces	Parks and Open Spaces	Q4 2022
Develop less intensive grounds maintenance regimes	Parks and Open Spaces	Q4 2022, Q1 2023
Produce a pesticides use policy and operational controls	Parks and Open Spaces	Q4 2022, Q1 2023
Produce a Trees Strategy	Parks and Open Spaces	Q1 2023
Produce an Invasive Species Strategy	Parks and Open Spaces	Q1 2023
Implement reduction in grounds maintenance intensity	Parks and Open Spaces	Q2 2023 (ongoing)
Produce Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	Parks and Open Spaces	Q1 2023, Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of existing and potentially new nature assets	Parks and Open Spaces	Q2 2023
<b>NRN Mapping and Coordination</b>		
Map all existing and potential new nature assets into cohesive NRN	Planning & Reg' Services	Q2 2023, Q3 2023
Prioritise existing and potential new opportunities to create cohesive NRN	Biodiversity Officer/All parties	Q2 2023, Q3 2023
<b>Species / Local Nature Recovery Strategies</b>		
Align with County's delivery of LNRS	County Council	Q1 2023, Q2 2023, Q3 2023, Q4 2023
<b>Land Use Planning</b>		
Review and produce supplementary planning documents/guidance	Planning & Reg	Q2 2023, Q3 2023, Q4 2023
Publish Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy	Planning & Reg - GNGB	Q4 2023
Develop a BNG Management Process	Planning & Reg	Q2 2023, Q3 2023, Q4 2023
Manage BNG applications adding new nature assets to NRN map	Planning & Reg	Q1 2024 (ongoing)
<b>NRN Programme Development</b>		
All partner action plan and funding plan development for NRN projects	Opportunity Owner	Q3 2023, Q4 2023, Q1 2024, Q2 2024
All partner resource plan	Opportunity Owner	Q3 2023, Q4 2023, Q1 2024, Q2 2024
All partner public communication, engagement and permissioning plan	Opportunity Owner	Q1 2024, Q2 2024, Q3 2024, Q4 2024
All partner programme implementation	All Partners	Q1 2024 (ongoing)
<b>Realisation of educational opportunities</b>		
Develop a register of educators	Biodiversity Officer	Q4 2022
Develop a communications and engagement plan	Biod/Comm Officers	Q4 2022, Q1 2023
Develop a register of educational opportunities	Educators	Q2 2023
Develop a schedule of educational assets and programme	Educators	Q3 2023, Q4 2023

Implement education programmes	Educators	Q4 2023 (ongoing)
<b>Implementation, Measurement and Reporting</b>		
Develop biodiversity baseline and monitoring methodology	Planning & Reg' Services	Q4 2022, Q1 2023, Q2 2023
Production and publication of biodiversity baseline report	Planning & Reg' Services	Q3 2023
Develop a City's Index methodology	Biodiversity Officer	Q3 2023, Q4 2023
Develop, from the methodology a set of reporting KPI's	Biodiversity Officer	Q3 2023, Q4 2023
Implementation of NRN Programme	Opportunity Owners	Q1 2024 (ongoing)
Ongoing measurement of biodiversity	Biodiversity Officer	Q1 2024 (ongoing)
Ongoing KPI reporting	Biodiversity Officer	Q1 2024 (ongoing)

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