

Environment Sub Committee

Tuesday, 12 January 2021

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors A Austin, L Bartoli, L Bell, J Cruddas, J Mole
and E Parker-Leonard

Apologies: Councillors A Percy

E1/21 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members reported.

E2/21 Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

E3/21 Biodiversity Action Plan Report Update 2019/20

Consideration was given to a presentation and report which provided an update on the delivery of the Newcastle and North Tyneside Joint Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) during 2019/20.

During 2019/20 a number of schemes had been undertaken to deliver the BAP including:

- the restoration, management and creation of 1.4 hectares of wildflower grassland at over 70 different sites across the Borough;
- the creation of brownfield butterfly habitat in the West Chirton Industrial Estate;
- the creation of a number of species rich grasslands as part of the planning process;
- woodland, hedgerow and shrub planting which had been secured as part of the planning process;
- tree and shrub management had been carried out over the winter at various parts of the Borough including the Fish Quay, St Mary's Nature Reserve, Holywell Dene and Brierdene;
- community groups had undertaken a significant amount of native bulb planting at several locations across the Borough including the Rising Sun Country Park;
- the Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDs) had been completed at Killingworth Lakeside Park, which included the provision of floating islands and marginal aquatic planting along with pond improvements;
- a new bog garden had been created in Northumberland Park and 5 new ponds had been created along the Silverlink Waggonway as part of footpath and drainage works carried out by the Authority;
- pond and watercourse improvements had been carried out at the Rising Sub Country Park and native scrub and wildflowers were intended to be planted at the site in Spring 2021

- bat habitat, boxes and hibernation roosts had been secured in a number of developments as part of the planning process;
- bird surveys had been carried out at various locations including Souter Park/Churchill Playing Fields, St Mary's Nature Reserve, Northumberland Park and Brierdene.

It was explained that there were a number of community groups who were very active in the area, maintaining and improving biodiversity in specific areas of the Borough. An update was provided on the works undertaken by the each of the groups so that Members could see the extent of the community involvement in maintaining and improving biodiversity in North Tyneside. The Chair asked the officer to pass on the Sub-committee's thanks for the works undertaken to improve biodiversity in the Borough.

Members noted that there were a number of community groups in operation but queried what happened in those areas which did not have an active community group. It was explained that the Authority undertook some of the works required but would welcome and encourage more community involvement. It was also explained that there might be community groups operating who did not come to the attention of the Authority and who were happy to continue in that vein.

Clarification was sought on how the site had been created at West Chirton. It was explained that the turf and soil had been transferred from the current site to the new site as the eggs of the dingy skipper butterfly were laid at the base of plants and that was the only way to ensure that the new site would be colonised by butterflies.

Reference was made to the installation of netting to deter kittiwakes from roosting/nesting on buildings. It was explained that the Authority did not have the power to prevent this or to require the removal of the netting.

Clarification was sought in relation to the subject of tree planting in the Borough. It was explained that where appropriate the Authority asked for woodland planting as part of granting planning permissions. The Authority was also working with other authorities across the region to bid for funding as part of the Trees for Climate Programme. It was also explained that plans were in place to replace some of the non-native species in the Rising Sun Country Park with suitable native species.

Reference was made to the increased use of the Borough's parks and open spaces due to the Covid-19 restrictions and an increased appreciation of green spaces in the vicinity of peoples' homes.

The Chair thanked the officer for her presentation/report.

It was **agreed** that the presentation and report be noted.