



<b>Subject:</b>	New Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland
<b>Date:</b>	13 October 2015
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
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<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To inform Members of the publication of a new Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and the key implications for the Council.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	The Committee agree to review the Belfast Local Biodiversity Action Plan taking account of the new Biodiversity Strategy.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u> In July, a new Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland was published by the Department of Environment. The strategy is entitled 'Valuing Nature' and its overall objective is halting the loss of biodiversity.  The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 introduced a statutory duty for the Council to further the conservation of biodiversity. The duty requires public bodies "in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions." In performing this duty the Council must have regard to the NI Biodiversity Strategy.

The strategy sets out how Northern Ireland plans to meet its international obligations and local targets to protect biodiversity and ensure the environment can continue to support our people and economy.

It builds upon the first Biodiversity Strategy published in 2002 but adopts the modern and internationally agreed approach that emphasises the management of biological systems to deliver the materials and services upon which people depend – the ecosystem services approach.

The overall vision is:

‘By 2050, our life support system, nature, is protected and restored for its own sake, its essential contribution to our well-being and prosperity, and to avert catastrophic changes likely to arise from its loss.’

The mission of the strategy is to:

- make progress towards halting overall biodiversity loss,
- establish an ecosystem approach; and
- help business and society in general have greater understanding of the benefits nature can bring to life in Northern Ireland.

The strategy recognises that making progress to protect the natural environment requires commitment from a wide range of bodies including local government, business and the voluntary sector.

The strategy contains 50 high level actions which collectively will make a difference to halting the loss of biodiversity up to 2020.

The primary impact on the Council is within ‘Engaging Society and Developing Partnerships’. Councils are the Lead Body to ‘Review Local Biodiversity Action Plans to assist in the promotion and conservation of biodiversity at a local level’.

The Council has an existing Local Biodiversity Action Plan which is due for renewal in 2016. The Biodiversity Officer will develop a plan and it will be brought to committee for approval.

	<p>The new Biodiversity Strategy can be viewed at  <a href="http://www.doeni.gov.uk/natural-policy-biodiversity-strategy-to-2020-2015.pdf">http://www.doeni.gov.uk/natural-policy-biodiversity-strategy-to-2020-2015.pdf</a></p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Staff time will be required to review and implement the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are currently no equality or good relations implications.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>None</p>